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**The New
History of
Modern India
1707-1947**



Anil Chandra Banerjee

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THE NEW HISTORY OF MODERN INDIA

1707—1947

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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THE NEW HISTORY OF MODERN INDIA

1707-1947

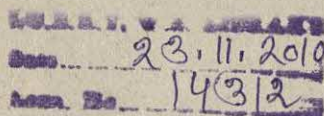
ANIL CHANDRA BANERJEE
*Formerly Professor of History,
Calcutta and Jadavpur Universities*



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PREFACE

Long experience of teaching in Colleges and Universities has convinced me that students of undergraduate classes require a text-book of moderate size and price on modern Indian history which will place before them the main results of researches in the subject and, while giving necessary prominence to political history, stress significant developments in economic, social and cultural history. In writing this volume I have kept this two-fold purpose in view. A text-book has no room for views which, though interesting in themselves, are yet in the stage of formulation and discussion.

A single volume is an extremely inadequate vehicle for communication of the huge mass of facts and views relating to the period 1707-1947 which scholars—British, Indian, American—have placed before us during a period of about two centuries. But text-books must recognize the limitations under which our undergraduates prosecute their studies, and authors trying to give them too rich and heavy fare will defeat their own purpose. I have aimed at preparing an introductory manual which, I hope, will serve their immediate purpose and at the same time provoke their interest in further exploration of the subject.

A. C. BANERJEE

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Corrigendum

Page 1, line 24: Insert Madras and Fort St. David: the French held Masulipatam and Pondichery: and the Dutch held after the English held

PART I (1707-1858)

CHAPTER I

DISINTEGRATION OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

I. BEGINNINGS OF DECLINE

Extent of Aurangzib's empire

At the time of Aurangzib's death (20 February 1707) the Mughal Empire consisted of 21 *subahs* (provinces): one (Kabul) in Afghanistan, 14 (Agra, Ajmer, Allahabad, Bengal, Bihar, Delhi, Gujarat, Kashmir, Lahore, Malwa, Multan, Orissa, Oudh, Thatta or Sind) in North India, and 6 (Aurangabad, Berar, Bidar or Telingana, Bijapur, Hyderabad, Khandesh) in the Deccan. It 'embraced, in the north, Kashmir and all Afghanistan from the Hindukush southwards to a line 36 miles south of Ghazni; on the west coast it stretched in theory to the northern frontier of Goa and inland to Belgaum and the Tungabhadra river'. The boundary then 'passed west to east in a disputed and ever shifting line through the centre of Mysore, dipping south-eastwards to the Coleroon river (north of Tanjore)'. In the east the empire was divided from Arakan by Chittagong (in Bengal, now in Bangladesh), and from Assam by the Monas river (west of Gauhati in Assam). However, throughout Maharashtra, Kanara, Mysore and the eastern Carnatic there were large areas described as *do-amli* ('obeying two masters') in which Mughal authority was disputed by local rulers.' In the coastal regions European traders had established several self-governing settlements. On the west coast the Portuguese held Diu, Daman, Bassein, Chaul and Goa; the English held Bombay; and the Dutch held Cochin. On the east coast the English held Bimlipatam, Pulicat, Sadras and Negapatam. In Bengal the English held Calcutta and the French held Pondichery.

Over-centralization

No Emperor of India since the death of Asoka had ruled over such extensive territories. The expansionist policy initiated by Akbar, and continued by Jahangir and Shah Jahan, reached the climax of its success in the second half of Aurangzib's reign. The years 1686-89, which saw the annexation of Bijapur and Golkunda and the apparent collapse of the Maratha

power, marked the zenith of Mughal political ascendancy. 'The Mughal crescent rounded to fullness'.

But the vast extent of Aurangzib's empire at the final stage of its expansion was a source of weakness rather than of strength, for it was 'too large to be ruled by one man from one centre'. Even when the empire was smaller in size Akbar realized that it was large enough to rule out over-centralization. He confined his attention to supervision and control and avoided details. 'A monarch', he said, 'should not himself undertake duties which may be performed by his subjects. The error of others it is his part to remedy, but his own lapses who can correct?' Aurangzib never realized the importance of this principle enunciated by the builder of the Mughal Empire. He was an honest and plodding administrator who loved over-centralization and crushed the initiative and sense of responsibility of his subordinates. His close personal attention to details of administration and military operations made his officers 'lifeless puppets moved to action by the master pulling their strings from the capital'. Sunk in details, rigid in mind and obstinate in outlook, the last of the Great Mughals could not grow into 'a statesman initiating a new policy and legislating, with prophetic foresight for moulding the life and thought of unborn generations in advance'. Probably he realized his mistake towards the close of his life. He wrote in his last letter to his son Azam: 'I have not at all done any (true) government of the realm.....'.

Religious policy

Aurangzib's religious policy affected the fortunes of the empire in different regions. Religious persecution acted as a provocation—in varying degrees—in the risings of the Satnamis, the Bundelas and the Sikhs. Fear of suppression of Hinduism was as important a factor as the fear of loss of political rights in the thirty years' war carried on by the Rathor Rajputs. The urge to uphold *Hindu dharma* stiffened the resistance of the Marathas. The imposition of the *jizya* offended the sentiment and injured the material interest of the Hindus. On the whole, Aurangzib's impolitic zeal for Islam weakened the foundations of the multi-religious imperial structure which had been created by Akbar and was not materially affected by fitful persecution in the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan.

The attempt to annex Marwar, the leading Hindu principality in the empire, was a grave mistake. It led to a long

and costly war in Rajasthan. It alienated the Rajputs whose political and military support had played a vital role in the consolidation and maintenance of Mughal power for a century. The adventure in Rajasthan led directly to the greater and far more disastrous adventure in the Deccan. The revolt of prince Akbar with Rathor support and his flight to the Maratha court dragged Aurangzib to the South. There he passed the second half of his reign (1682-1707), paying little attention to the affairs of North India and involving the resources of the empire in political and military efforts which failed to crush the Marathas.

'Deccan ulcer'

The 'Deccan ulcer'—the long Maratha War—contributed substantially to the decline of the empire. 'The endless war in the Deccan exhausted the treasury; the Government turned bankrupt; the soldiers, starving from arrears of pay, mutinied'. The Maratha country, says Manucci, became 'devoid of trees and bare of crops, their place being taken by the bones of men and beasts'. In two years (1702-4) plague and famine took a toll of over two millions of souls. The historian Bhimsen, an eye-witness, writes: 'All administration has disappeared..... The realm has been desolated. The ryots have given up cultivation; the *jagirdars* do not get a penny from their fiefs'. The desperate peasants collected arms and horses and joined the Maratha raiders.

The 'Deccan ulcer' affected the administration and economy of North India. Aurangzib's long absence from the imperial capital weakened the Central Government in its relations with the provinces. The provincial governors (*subahdars*), largely free from his supervision and control, ceased to have respect or fear for imperial authority. The administrative machinery in the provinces was weakened because 'their best soldiers, highest officers, and all their collected revenues were sent to the Deccan'. 'The older, and more settled, peaceful and prosperous provinces' in the North were 'left to be governed by minor officers with small contingents and incomes quite inadequate for maintaining viceregal authority'.

Naturally 'all classes of lawless men began to raise their hands'. Desultory war ruined large parts of Rajasthan. Some Rajput *zamindars* created disturbances in Malwa. Plundering Maratha bands penetrated into Malwa and Gujarat. The Jats carried on raids in the Agra region. The Sikhs fought against

the Mughals and the Hill Rajas in the Punjab. In Bengal there were hostilities between the English traders and the Mughal officers as also rebellions of local chieftains. In his self-chosen exile in the Deccan the aged Emperor lost his grip over the administration of those provinces which formed the backbone of the empire.

Military expenditure

The vast empire yielded a large revenue. Excluding Afghanistan, the empire had a land-revenue of rupees 13 *crores* and 21 *lakhs* under Akbar; at the end of Aurangzib's reign it rose to rupees 33 *crores* and 25 *lakhs*. These figures represented the standard or maximum State demand from land, but the estimated amount was never fully realized and the actual collection generally fell short of it. To the income from land was added the income from other sources, such as the *zakat* (one-fortieth of the annual income of Muslims, to be spent solely in religious charity) and the *jizya* paid by the Hindus under Aurangzib's order of 1679. A large proportion of this vast income was spent on the army. In the closing decade of Shah Jahan's reign the armed forces of the empire consisted of (1) 200,000 troopers, (2) 8,000 *mansabdars*, (3) 7,000 *ahadis* and *barqandazes*, (4) 185,000 additional troopers of the princes, the *umara* and the *mansabdars*, and (5) 40,000 artillery men. There was considerable numerical increase in Aurangzib's reign, particularly in its second half as a result of continuous war in the Deccan, 'until his finances hopelessly broke down under the weight of his military expenditure'. The number of *mansabdars* rose from 8,000 under Shah Jahan to 14,449 under Aurangzib. Thus Aurangzib's army bill was 'roughly double that of Shah Jahan', but neither the size of the empire nor its income had been doubled in the intervening years.

Crisis in mansabdari system

Out of 14,449 *mansabdars* under Aurangzib about 7,000 were paid through *jagirs* and 7,450 were paid in cash. The *mansabdari* system reached a crisis as a result of the enormous increase in the number of the *mansabdars* who had to be paid through *jagirs*. As an adequate number of *jagirs* was not available, many *mansabdars* had to wait for some time—even for a long time—before they could get *jagirs*. Even when *jagirs* were available in the Deccan the Government could not always ensure security of tenure because these were often exposed to the

risk of sudden occupation by the Marathas. Moreover, constant military operations in the Deccan, and disturbances and lawlessness in the North Indian provinces, reduced cultivation in both regions, and the peasants generally failed to pay their full dues to the *jagirdars*. The *mansabdars*' uncertainty about their income from their *jagirs* weakened the numerical strength of the army, for the number of troopers to be maintained by each of them was determined by the salary and allowances (payable through *jagirs*) attached to his *mansab*. Large-scale corruption crept into the *mansabdari* system and sapped the foundations of the Mughal military power.

Economic decay

Aurangzib confessed in his last letter to prince Azam: 'I have not at all done any ... cherishing of the peasantry'. In his last letter to prince Kam Bakhsh he wrote: 'See to it that the peasantry and the people ... are not unjustly ruined'. The main principle of the agrarian system during his reign was to leave for the cultivator 'as much as he required for his own support till the next crop be reaped and that of his family, and for seed'. What remained was land-revenue and was to go to the treasury. Throughout the Mughal period it was from the surplus produce of the peasantry that the governing class derived its wealth. Bernier says: 'The country is ruined by the necessity of defraying the enormous charges required to maintain the splendour of a numerous court, and to pay a large army maintained for keeping the people in subjection ... the cudgel and the whip compel them to incessant labour for the benefit of others'. The high rate of land-revenue payable to the State, the 'execrable tyranny' practised by *jagirdars* and revenue-farmers and the corruption of petty officers drove many peasants to the estates of chiefs where they expected better conditions. In some cases they gave up their lands to work as servants in the towns or with the army. Bernier testifies to the decline of agriculture in Aurangzib's reign.

War, disorder and official exactions injured trade and industry. Trade almost ceased in the Deccan during the long period of Aurangzib's war with the Marathas. The Maratha raiders made it almost impossible for caravans to travel north of the Narmada without strong escorts. On the Coromandel coast the large weaving population was so unsettled by military operations in the Carnatic that the English and the French traders could not procure enough clothes for loading their

Europe-going ships. Even where war was not raging—in Bengal, for instance,—local disorders as also oppressive methods adopted by *subahdars* and subordinate officials disturbed industrial production and commercial transactions. 'Thus ensued a great economic impoverishment of India—not only a decrease of the "national stock", but also a rapid lowering of mechanical skill and standard of cultivation, a disappearance of art and culture over wide tracts of the country'.

Nobility

The Mughal nobles, who were the pillars of the empire, had succumbed to the fatal vice of love of ease and luxury in the reign of Shah Jahan; they had already become 'pale persons in muslin petticoats'. The process of decline gained speed in Aurangzib's reign. Immigration from Persia and Central Asia almost came to a stop; the most important source of supply of fresh talent was cut off. The Rajputs, alienated by Aurangzib's suspicion and hostility, were reluctant to serve the empire. Moreover, Rajput society no longer produced warrior-statesmen like Man Singh and Mirza Raja Jai Singh. The Muslim nobles found that bigotry and narrowness of outlook, rather than merit and catholicity, were qualifications demanded at Aurangzib's court. 'High-spirited, talented and energetic officers found themselves checked, discouraged and driven to sullen inactivity ... Aurangzib in his later years ... could bear no contradiction, could hear no unpalatable truth, but surrounded himself with smooth-tongued and pompous echoes of his own voice. His ministers became no better than clerks passively registering his edicts'.

Such nobles could not carry the burden of a great empire. 'The historians Bhimsen and Khafi Khan were struck by the hopeless change for the worse that had seized the Indian world and looked wistfully back at the virtues of the men of the times of Akbar and Shah Jahan'. The only survivor of the old nobility in Aurangzib's last years was Asad Khan. Aurangzib observed in his last will: 'There is not, nor will there (ever) be, any *wazir* better than Asad Khan'.

Army

Irvine says: 'Military inefficiency was the principal, if not the sole cause of the Mughal Empire's final collapse. All other defects and weaknesses were as nothing in comparison with this'.

The Mughal military system had certain basic defects.

First, the army had no national character or even natural cohesion. Composed of diverse racial elements and religious groups such as Turks, Afghans, Rajputs and Hindustanis, it was a mercenary fighting force. The real allegiance of the troops was not to the imperial throne but to persons in immediate command. If a prince, or a *mansabdar* or a tributary chief rebelled against the Emperor, he could usually carry his troops with him. Secondly, though the army was numerically strong, the infantry was practically useless, and there was really no naval wing. Moreover, the proportion of officers to men on active service was very low. Thirdly, the army moved slowly like an unwieldy city 'encumbered with all the lavish paraphernalia of the imperial court'. It was incapable of 'swift action or brilliant adventure'. Camp-followers far outnumbered combatants. Fourthly, the luxuries of camp life demoralized the nobles who were the leaders of the army. Ease-loving commanders could not maintain a high standard of discipline among the troops. Fifthly, there was no commissariat service; each man had to make his own transport arrangements. Supplies were provided by large bazars marching with the army. Finally, antiquated weapons were used and antiquated methods of war were followed. This became a source of weakness in the Mughal-Persian contest for Kandahar.

'Long before Aurangzib's death the military power of the State had become contemptible'. Manucci remarked that 30,000 good European troops could occupy the Mughal Empire. Aurangzib made no attempt to improve the army in any respect, apart from doubling the number of *mansabdars* and adding to the number of troopers. The long—and essentially unsuccessful—war against the Marathas broke the spirit of the Mughal army. Aurangzib wrote to his son Muazzam: 'Owing to my marching through deserts and forests my officers long for my death'. The non-availability of an adequate number of *jagirs*, and the difficulty of realizing the estimated land-revenue from such *jagirs* as were assigned to the *mansabdars*, broke their morale and reduced the numerical strength of the troopers under their command.

2. LATER MUGHALS

Bahadur Shah (1707-12)

At the end of Aurangzib's reign the Mughal Empire 'was in a state of hopeless decay; administration, culture, economic

life, military strength and social organization—all seemed to be hastening to utter ruin and dissolution'. He had failed to solve the problems inherited from his predecessors, and he had added new problems. 'These together shook the empire to its very foundations'.

Aurangzib apprehended that a war of succession would break out after his death among his three surviving sons: Muazzam, Azam, Kam Bakhsh. Feeling that it was no longer possible to preserve the unity of the empire, he left a will providing for its partition among the three potential claimants. The authenticity of this document is doubtful; in any case it was ignored after his death and a war of succession followed.

Muazzam, *subahdar* of Kabul, was at Jamrud when he heard of his father's death. He set out at once for Agra where he arrived on 12 June 1707, having crowned himself Emperor with the title of Bahadur Shah on his way near Lahore. Meanwhile Azam, *subahdar* of Gujarat, had hastened to Ahmadnagar and proclaimed himself Emperor there on 14 March. After securing peaceful possession of Agra and Delhi Muazzam met Azam, who was advancing towards the North from Ahmadnagar through Gwalior, at Jajau near Agra on 18 June. Azam was defeated and killed, along with his two sons. Undeterred by Azam's fate, Kam Bakhsh, *subahdar* of Bijapur, assumed 'all the attributes of sovereignty' and conquered some important places including Gulbarga and Hyderabad. Bahadur Shah marched to the Deccan through Rajasthan and crossed the Narmada on 17 May 1708. A battle took place near Hyderabad on 13 January 1709; Kam Bakhsh and his son were mortally wounded. Thus the war of succession ended in the death of two of Aurangzib's sons and three of his grandsons.

Aurangzib's war for the occupation of Marwar, begun in 1679, was not brought to a close by his death. The Rathor Maharaja, Ajit Singh, recovered his ancestral capital Jodhpur by expelling the Mughal commandant. Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh of Amber supported Azam. Maharana Amar Singh of Mewar was not well disposed towards the new imperial regime. Bahadur Shah paid two visits to Rajasthan—before and after the fall of Kam Bakhsh. A settlement was made with Ajit Singh and Jai Singh in June 1710. The Rajput princes had to be conciliated because the revolt of the Sikhs under Banda in the Punjab had taken a serious turn.

Bahadur Shah died on 27 February 1712. He was mild,

generous, learned and pious without any bigotry. But he lacked firmness and capacity for taking decisions on difficult issues; his instruments were compromise and conciliation. He found no final solution of the Rajput problem. He failed to crush Sikh resistance. His attempt to reconcile the rival claims of two leading nobles of his court—Munim Khan and Asad Khan—had no long-term success. He was lavish in granting *jagirs* and promotions. He exhausted the accumulated treasure at Agra which had fallen into his hands in 1707 and left the salary of artillery men in arrears. Though less intolerant towards the Hindus than his father he did not abolish the *jizya* or the discriminatory regulations. Yet he was the last of the Mughal Emperors who enjoyed some dignity and real authority. This was due largely to the fact that 'he inherited his father's able officers and treated them with confidence and respect'. He generally kept himself above court intrigues and factional strife for office and power.

Jahandar Shah (1712-13)

Bahadur Shah's death was followed by a war of succession in which his eldest son, Jahandar Shah, emerged victorious over his three brothers: Azim-ush-shan, Rafi-ush-shan, Jahan Shah. The three losers lost their lives.

Jahandar Shah's success was due to the efforts of Zulfiqar Khan, son of Asad Khan, who, as the new Emperor's minister, became supreme in the State. The new reign, says the historian Khafi Khan, 'was a fine time for minstrels and singers and all the tribes of dancers and actors'. Utterly depraved in his morals, Jahandar Shah was dominated by his mistress Lal Kunwar. She 'imitated the style of Nur Jahan'; 'her kinsmen robbed and mismanaged the State, the highest dignitaries were insulted and thwarted by the favourite's low-born associates, the crown was stripped of dignity and prestige in the public eye, and the entire tone of society and administration was vulgarised'. Zulfiqar Khan left most of his official work to a favourite named Subhag Chand whose pretensions and insolence offended all and sundry.

Farrukh-siyar, son of Azim-ush-shan, who was at Patna at the time of his father's downfall, had proclaimed himself Emperor there in April 1712. He secured the support of Sayyid Husain Ali and Sayyid Hasan Ali whom Azim-ush-shan had accepted as deputy governors of Bihar and Allahabad under him. He collected troops, proceeded towards Agra, and defeated

Jahandar Shah outside that city on 10 January 1713. The fallen Emperor fled to Delhi, where he was betrayed by Asad Khan and Zulfiqar Khan and murdered in prison by Farrukh-siyar's order.

Jahandar Shah's fall was due primarily to his own incompetence. 'He was the first sovereign of the house of Timur who proved himself absolutely unfitted to rule'. But the situation was worsened by the bitter personal jealousies and quarrels which divided the highest imperial officers. They were divided into factions, 'each group or bloc trying to push the fortunes of its members and hinder the success of its rival groups'. There were three important groups: the Turanis (of Central Asian origin), the Iranis (who came from Persia and Khurasan), the Hindustanis (Muslims of foreign origin who were born in India or domiciled for a long period in this country; and with whom were associated Hindu princes and nobles). The Turanis enjoyed preference in the Mughal court as they were fellow-countrymen of the Timurid Emperors. The Turani soldiers formed a large proportion of the army and their leaders excelled in military skill as well as administrative capacity. The Iranis were specially gifted in revenue and secretarial work, but they were generally less influential in State affairs than the Turanis. The Turanis and the Iranis were divided not only by political ambition but also by religion: the former were Sunnis, the latter Shias. The 'cross-currents of antagonism' between them emerged as a fatal political force because Jahandar Shah was totally incapable of keeping them under control. The Hindustanis, 'conspicuously inferior in intellect and capacity', were jealous of the two dominant groups.

Farrukh-siyar (1713-19)

Farrukh-siyar was 'strong neither for evil nor for good'. He was 'feeble, false, cowardly and contemptible'. He kept the State in 'a condition of unstable equilibrium' for six years and succumbed to a cruel fate which was hardly undeserved.

Farrukh-siyar occupied the throne in January 1713. He had naturally to give the highest offices to the Sayyid brothers to whom he owed his elevation to the throne. Hasan Ali (created Abdullah Khan, Qutb-ul-Mulk) became *wazir* (head of civil administration) and Husain Ali (created Amir-ul-umara, Firuz Jang) became the first *bakhshi* (paymaster of the armed forces). Some high offices were given to the Emperor's personal friends, of whom the most prominent was Mir Jumla. Among

the new provincial governors the most important was Chin Qilich Khan Bahadur, better known as Nizam-ul-Mulk, who was put in charge of the six provinces of the Deccan and had his headquarters at Aurangabad. He was one of the leaders of the Turani party and 'the ablest man in the empire'.

Zulfiqar Khan was treacherously murdered by Farrukh-siyar's order and his property was confiscated. Asad Khan lingered in misery till his death in 1716. The elimination of 'the last prominent survivors of the great age of Aurangzib' was a political mistake.

The family of the Sayyid brothers was settled at Barha in the upper Ganges-Jumna Doab, between Meerut and Saharanpur. Its members had earned, by their bravery and capacity for command, the right to the honour of leading the imperial vanguard in battles. Hasan Ali and Husain Ali had held important commands in Aurangzib's reign and secured promotion from Bahadur Shah for their service at Jajau. They had subsequently lost imperial favour, but Azim-ush-shan had taken them under his favour and put them in charge of two provinces (Allahabad and Bihar). The position occupied by them after Farrukh-siyar's accession was a well-earned reward for their services, but he was too fickle-minded to trust them even though he was incapable of exercising personal power.

In order to make it impossible for the Sayyid brothers to displace him and set up on the throne some other prince of the house of Babur, Farrukh-siyar blinded some of the prominent members of the imperial family who had been held in captivity. He allowed his favourites like Mir Jumla to thwart the Sayyid ministers. A bitter quarrel arose between the Emperor and the two brothers as early as March 1713, but, lacking the courage to strike, he patched up a truce. However, he continued to indulge in foolish and perfidious plans to weaken them. The estrangement reached a climax in February 1719. Assisted by Ajit Singh of Marwar, who had married his daughter to Farrukh-siyar, the Sayyid brothers deposed and murdered the Emperor. 'The Sayyids were forced into action by a regard for their own lives and honour'.

During Farrukh-siyar's reign the weakness of the Imperial Government encouraged revolts, and three military campaigns were undertaken to suppress them. Ajit Singh of Marwar, who had made his submission to Bahadur Shah, re-asserted his independence and even occupied Ajmer. Husain Ali marched

against him and compelled him to sue for peace. Banda, the Sikh leader, was defeated, captured and executed. A campaign led by Sawai Jai Singh of Amber for the suppression of a Jat rising under Churaman ended in a compromise. Husain Ali made a settlement with Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath.

Fall of Sayyid brothers

After deposing Farrukh-siyar (February 1719) the Sayyid brothers placed on the throne Rafi-ud-darajat, a son of Rafi-ush-shan (the second son of Bahadur Shah). He died of consumption within four months (June 1719). 'He lived and died as a captive of the Sayyid brothers'. They enthroned his elder brother Rafi-ud-daula with the title of Shah Jahan II. A sickly youth addicted to opium, he died in September 1719. The Sayyids' choice fell upon Raushan-Akhtar, a son of Jahan Shah (the fourth son of Bahadur Shah). He was placed on the throne, under the title of Muhammad Shah, in September 1719.

The King-makers' victory was short-lived. Muhammad Shah was weak and inexperienced, but not as feeble as his two predecessors. The Turani nobles were powerful antagonists of the Sayyids; the Iranis also were weary of their domination. The two brothers weakened themselves by their own disagreements, and they were unfit to carry the burden of ruling a decadent empire which fortune had thrust upon them. A conspiracy was organized by the Turani leader, Muhammad Amin Khan; among his associates was Sa'adat Khan, a Shia leader. Husain Ali was murdered in October 1720 by an assassin connected with Muhammad Amin Khan. Hasan Ali was defeated by the imperialists in a battle at Bilochpur, a village on the Jumna, in November 1720. He was captured, kept in prison for two years, and then killed by poison. The Sayyid brothers fell ignominiously after playing a dominant role in imperial affairs for about eight years. They were 'destined to be remembered in Indian history as the first King-makers and the worst examples of ingratitude'.

Muhammad Shah (1719-48)

Muhammad Shah had a long reign of about thirty years. For more than a year after his accession he was a virtual prisoner—like his predecessors—in the hands of the Sayyid brothers. When their fall freed him from their tutelage he fell into the clutches of several groups of unworthy favourites,

one after another. In the absence of firm imperial control public affairs fell into the hands of cliques and groups. The old Turani-Irani rivalry remained a prominent feature of imperial politics; but groups were generally formed in the context of the interest of an individual or a clique of individuals. There was no question of any political principle, and no regard was paid to the interest of the empire. Growing licentiousness marked the imperial court as also the miniature courts of the big nobles, much to the annoyance and disgust of a few men of the old school like Nizam-ul-Mulk.

Macaulay wrote: 'A succession of nominal sovereigns, sunk in indolence and debauchery, sauntered away life in secluded palaces, chewing *bhang*, fondling concubines, and listening to buffoons'. This is not an inaccurate description of the occupants of the Mughal throne after Bahadur Shah's death. By character and training all of them were absolutely unfit to carry on the old tradition and use with moderate success the machinery left by Aurangzib. But the forces of decadence had made such progress, and the empire had reached such a condition, that 'none but an Akbar could have restored the imperial authority'.

The only remaining political asset was the lingering prestige of the Timurid family. 'The Mughal dynasty still retained a powerful hold on the mind and imagination of the people'. The powerful provincial rulers acknowledged imperial supremacy even though they did not submit to imperial control. The rebel Marathas recognized the Mughal sovereign. The Rajput princes did not repudiate their traditional allegiance to the imperial throne. The *khutba* was read everywhere in the Emperor's name. The *sicca* bearing his name was the recognized unit of the currency in all parts of the country. The unworthy Mughals of the eighteenth century were incapable of making practical use of this great legacy.

Under the Great Mughals the *wazir* was the Emperor's principal servant, appointed and dismissed by him at his pleasure, and functioning as an instrument for carrying out his policy. The Sayyid brothers introduced the principle of 'all-controlling wazirship' under which the Emperor became a puppet in the hands of the *wazir*. This innovation in the Mughal system of government became the established practice in Muhammad Shah's reign. His first *wazir* after the fall of the Sayyid brothers was Muhammad Amin Khan who had played the leading

role in liberating the Emperor from their tutelage. After his death in January 1721 the office was conferred upon Nizam-ul-Mulk who took charge a year later. His tenure was brief. Although he was interested primarily in consolidating his own position in the viceroyalty of the Deccan, he made a serious attempt to revitalize the empire. He initiated a scheme of reform which was designed 'to restore the efficiency of the administration and to repair the finances of the empire'. But his proposals affected the interest of many influential persons, and the Emperor, instead of supporting him, indirectly created difficulties for him. The provincial governors defied his orders. The heterogeneous nobility, torn by personal jealousies, opposed concentration of power in a single person—particularly one who tried to encroach upon their privileges. An unsuccessful attempt was made to deprive him of the viceroyalty of the Deccan. Realizing that neither the Emperor nor the nobility wanted reform, he left his charge and laid the foundation of the independence of Hyderabad by a military victory (October, 1724). He was succeeded as *wazir* by Qamruddin, son of Muhammad Amin Khan, an indolent drunkard who 'considered it supreme wisdom to keep his post and do as little work as possible'. He was dismissed when it was considered necessary to break the power of the Turani party. His successor, Raushan-ud-daula, was found guilty of having misappropriated enormous sums of money. He was replaced by Khan Dauran.

During the first two decades of Muhammad Shah's reign the disintegration of the empire made rapid progress. Among the provinces Bengal acquired virtual independence during the governorship of Murshid Kuli Khan (1717-27). Oudh adopted the same course after the appointment of Sa'adat Khan as *subahdar* (1722), and Nizam-ul-Mulk made himself independent viceroy of the Deccan (1724). In Malwa and Gujarat the incursions of the Marathas and the jealous quarrels of the imperial governors practically eliminated Mughal authority. The two provinces were lost to the empire in 1741 and 1737 respectively. Rajasthan, torn by inter-State conflicts and suffering from Maratha depredations, gradually slipped out of the imperial sphere of influence. Bundelkhand, which had been resisting Mughal authority since the reign of Shah Jahan, was partly occupied by the Marathas after 1731. The Jats under Badan Singh established themselves in the districts of Agra and Mathura.

Invasion of Nadir Shah (1738-39)

Over this distracted empire fell the serious blow of a foreign invasion led by a powerful conqueror. During the first three decades of the eighteenth century the Safavi Empire of Persia broke into pieces. Political power fell into the hands of a group of 'quarrelsome and unwarlike nobles', Russian and Turkish invasions contributed to confusion and weakness, and practically the entire country was occupied by the Afghans. In 1729 Persia found a deliverer in a Turk of Khurasan, Nadir Quli, who expelled the Afghans and seized supreme authority in the State. A puppet Safavi monarch was allowed to sit on the throne till 1736 when he assumed the title of Shah. After defeating the Russians and the Turks he turned his attention to the Afghans. He captured Herat and Balkh; this was followed by the siege and capture of Kandahar (1737-38).

It was in connection with this anti-Afghan campaign that Nadir Shah came into contact with the Mughals. He sent three envoys to Delhi, asking Muhammad Shah to direct the Mughal governor of Kabul to close the frontiers of that province to fugitives from Kandahar; but there was no response. From Kandahar he proceeded to Ghazni and soon afterwards took Kabul by siege (June 1738). He waited in vain for several months for a reply from Delhi to his letter to the Emperor. Then he proceeded to the Indian frontier, defeated at Jamrud the governor of Kabul who tried with an Afghan force to bar his exit from the Khyber pass (November 1738), occupied Peshawar and crossed the Indus at Attock (December 1738). At Wazirabad on the Chenab he met with feeble resistance which he 'swept away as a flood sweeps away a handful of chaff' (January 1739). Proceeding towards Lahore he defeated the governor and received his submission. From Lahore he wrote to Muhammad Shah, expressing surprise that he had not received Mughal co-operation in chastising the Afghans, complaining that his envoys and letters had been ignored, and declaring that he would advance to punish those evil counsellors who were responsible for misleading the Emperor in this matter. He did not attribute any deliberate design to Muhammad Shah himself.

There was substance in Nadir Shah's complaint about disregard for his repeated requests to the Emperor to desist from affording asylum to the Afghans. But this was hardly an adequate cause for leading an expedition to the capital of India.

the occupation of the Kabul *subah* would have been a sufficient vindication of his power and prestige; it would also have marked the completion of his plan to subjugate the Afghans. It has been suggested that both Nizam-ul-Mulk and Sa'adat Khan, the two rivals in the imperial court representing the Turani party and the Irani party respectively, invited Nadir Shah to invade India. There is no definite proof in support of this assumption. Nadir Shah, however, is said to have told Muhammad Shah that the Emperor had only three faithful servants, and the rest (including Nizam-ul-Mulk and Sa'adat Khan) were traitors who had sent invitations to him. Another view is that he was drawn to India by the greed of wealth. 'With the spoil of India', it has been said, 'he could raise and pay more Afghan and Uzbek levies, and so renew war with the Turks; besides, by invading the Punjab he would be following the example of Alexander the Great, Mahmud of Ghazni, and thereby merit the title of *World Conqueror*'. But it is doubtful whether he was really well informed about the wealth and resources of India. After the battle of Karnal he was persuaded to leave India with an indemnity of twenty million rupees only; 'the instinct of the Turkoman robber was roused' by Sa'adat Khan's alluring statement that immense treasures were stored in Delhi.

The news of Nadir Shāh's intention to invade India should have been no surprise to the court of Delhi. Since the final occupation of Kandahar by the Persians in the reign of Shah Jahan 'the Persian peril had hung like a dark cloud on the western frontier of India'. But Muhammad Shah and his advisers lived in a self-created shell and attached no importance to Nadir Shah's rise to power and his progress through Afghanistan. Reports about his intentions were received with incredulity. Even when the governor of Kabul sent a note of warning and appealed for reinforcements the imperial *wazir*, Khan Dauran, said that he was 'a man of too great experience to be caught by such stories that are often made up to extort gold'. After the fall of Kabul 'incredulity gave way to panic, which increased with every stage of the invader's advance'. Hurried attempts were made to organize resistance. The situation was considered serious enough to demand the presence of the Emperor at the head of all the troops which could be placed in the field. Nobles and assignees, as also the chiefs of Rajasthan, were summoned to come to Delhi with their contingents, but all of them made their excuses. 'Akbar, similarly situated, could

have commanded the service of many thousands of valiant Rajputs, but the descendant of Aurangzib could not persuade one to strike a blow in defence of the throne'.

From Lahore Nadir Shah marched through Sirhind and Ambala towards Karnal (February 1739). The imperial army, about 75,000 strong, led by Muhammad Shah himself, had already arrived at Karnal, well protected by nearly impenetrable jungle and by the canal of Ali Mardan Khan. A few days later Sa'adat Khan arrived from Oudh with his tired and exhausted troops. An impetuous move on his part precipitated a battle at Karnal (24 February 1739) before the imperial army had time to work out a planned strategy. Khan Dauran was mortally wounded. Sa'adat Khan was wounded and carried as a prisoner to the Persian camp. Muhammad Shah and his nobles took refuge in the imperial camp where they became virtual prisoners threatened by scarcity of provisions.

Through the mediation of Sa'adat Khan, still a prisoner in the Persian camp, and Nizam-ul-Mulk, Muhammad Shah's emissary, Nadir Shah agreed to leave the Emperor on the throne of Delhi and to retire from India immediately in consideration of an indemnity of twenty million rupees. But this arrangement was upset by Sa'adat Khan's jealousy and greed. The Emperor conferred upon Nizam-ul-Mulk the rank and title of *amir-ul-umara* which the deceased Khan Dauran had borne, but Sa'adat Khan coveted this honour. The Irani leader, enraged at the preference shown to the Turani leader, told Nadir Shah that he had been duped by Nizam-ul-Mulk, and that he would get much more than twenty million rupees if he occupied Delhi. The invader set out from Karnal for Delhi and entered the capital on 20 March 1739. A rumour spread by mischief-makers that Nadir Shah was dead caused a rising in the city and about 900 Persians were killed. The angry invader ordered a general massacre. The slain numbered 30,000 and a large part of the city was burnt. The killing stopped at the humble request of the Emperor and all captives—numbering about 50,000—were set free.

Sa'adat Khan committed suicide 'to save his name and honour' because he failed to satisfy Nadir Shah's demand for money. His successor, Safdar Jang, and other nobles, including Nizam-ul-Mulk, had to contribute enormous sums to the invader's treasury. The value of the pearls, diamonds and other jewels, including Shah Jahan's Peacock Throne, which he

appropriated, was beyond computation. On 16 May 1739 he left Delhi, carrying with him immense booty: cash amounting to more than thirty million sterling, jewels, valuable articles, 1,000 elephants, 7,000 horses, and 10,000 camels. The spoils—collected in many cases by violence and torture—enabled him to remit all taxes throughout Persia for a period of three years.

Such drain of wealth was without precedent in the history of India, and its impact on the economy of the country must have been very serious. Muhammad Shah received his ancestral throne practically as a gift from Nadir Shah, but the empire suffered a grievous amputation. The annexation of Kabul to the Persian Empire severed the last link between the Timurids in India and their ancestral possessions beyond its frontiers. Moreover, the revenues of four *mahals* (including Sialkot and Gujarat) in the Punjab were ceded to Nadir Shah. The defensive barrier of India on the north-west passed out of the hands of the ruler of Delhi.

Nadir Shah's speedy success revealed the Mughal Emperor's incapacity to defend even his capital and to preserve the integrity of the empire in a sector which was vital to its security. There was a complete exposure of the political, military and moral decay of the Mughal Empire. This was not a sudden revelation; the process had started many decades ago, and the 'disgrace, spoliation and dismemberment' which the empire suffered in 1739 was the inevitable effect of a creeping paralysis. Nadir Shah did not cause the decline of the empire; he merely proved that it was already dead. 'He broke the spell under which men had been regarding a gorgeously dressed corpse as a strong man'.

Ahmad Shah Abdali: early invasions (1747-57)

Confusion became worse confounded, and discord more bitter, in Muhammad Shah's court after Nadir Shah's departure from India. The edifice of central administration broke down; the empire became a conglomeration of independent principalities formally acknowledging the Emperor's nominal suzerainty. Muhammad Shah 'realized both the helplessness of the situation and his own powerlessness to amend it'. Among the older nobles Nizam-ul-Mulk kept himself fully engaged in the Deccan and Qamruddin Khan sank into indolence and licentiousness. The younger nobles were unscrupulous self-seekers engaged in mutual strife. The army, deprived of efficient leadership and affected by the general laxity of discipline,

became a mob. On this collapsing structure fell the blow of Ahmad Shah Abdali's successive invasions.

Nadir Shah lost sanity sometime after his great success in India. He was murdered in 1747, and in the absence of a capable ruler his large empire dissolved. Among his chief commanders was Ahmad, an Afghan of the Sadozai branch of the Abdali tribe. After Nadir Shah's death he became master of Afghanistan and assumed the royal title (Shah). After occupying Kabul and Kandahar he advanced towards Peshawar, occupied the strategic city, and crossed the Indus (December 1747). Then followed the occupation of Lahore (January 1748).

'For the consolidation of his power at home Abdali relied in a great measure on the effects of his foreign wars. If these were successful, his victories would raise his reputation, and his conquests would supply him with the means of maintaining an army, and of attaching the Afghan chiefs by favour and rewards: the hopes of plunder would induce many tribes to join him'. To sustain his newly founded kingdom he needed wealth which India could provide, as he knew from his experience during Nadir Shah's invasion when he was in charge of a contingent of 6,000. 'Gold in Afghanistan was, more than anywhere else, the god of the human race'.

Delhi took serious notice of the new threat. A large army was collected and placed under the nominal command of Muhammad Shah's son, Ahmad, who was assisted by several great *amirs* as also by some Rajput chiefs. Abdali passed from Lahore to Sirhind which he captured (February 1748). The imperial army, entrenched at Manupur, 10 miles north-west of Sirhind, won a victory over the invading force (March 1748). Abdali retreated towards Afghanistan.

Muhammad Shah died in April 1748; prince Ahmad was enthroned as Ahmad Shah. He was a young voluptuary untrained in the art of war and government. His *wazir*, Safdar Jang of Oudh, lacked ability and looked only after his own interest. The nobles were sunk in indolence and mutual jealousy.

Undeterred by the failure of his first expedition, Abdali invaded the Punjab for the second time in 1749. The governor of the province, Muin-ul-Mulk, was seriously embarrassed by political rivals supported by the imperial *wazir* Safdar Jang. After some resistance he made peace with Abdali. The four *mahals* previously ceded to Nadir Shah were now ceded to

Abdali (1750). 'The Afghan got the first slice of India proper' (1750).

Abdali's third invasion took place in 1751, the excuse being the non-payment of the revenues of the four *mahals* in terms of the agreement. The Mughal troops under the governor of the Punjab, Muin-ul-Mulk, were defeated; he received no reinforcement from the Emperor (1752). The Punjab as also the *subah* of Multan passed into Abdali's possession by virtue of a treaty confirmed by the Emperor. Abdali left Muin-ul-Mulk to govern the two provinces on his behalf.

As a result of troubles in the Punjab following Muin-ul-Mulk's death in 1753 Abdali invaded India for the fourth time in 1756. The Punjab was occupied and Abdali's son Timur Shah was appointed its governor. Proceeding through Sirhind, Abdali reached Delhi (January 1757). The imperial *wazir*, Imad-ul-Mulk, was made a captive, and the puppet Emperor Alamgir II (successor of Ahmad Shah) was virtually deposed. The *khutba* was read in Abdali's name in Delhi although 'the Emperor of the Age (Alamgir II) was living in the citadel of the capital and had not been slain or made a prisoner or expelled'. But Abdali did not desire to rule in Delhi. Following the example of Nadir Shah in the case of Muhammad Shah, he allowed Alamgir II to continue to sit on the throne and restored Imad-ul-Mulk to the office of *wazir*. But with a view to controlling the nominal Imperial Government he left his chief ally, the Rohilla chief Najibuddaula, as the real master of Delhi. The people of Delhi suffered terrible atrocities during the period of Abdali's occupation.

'Abdali had marched from Attock to Delhi without a word being bared against him, such was the degradation of the Mughal Empire'. From Delhi he proceeded southward. After inflicting a crushing defeat on the Marathas under Antaji Mankeshwar who was raiding the neighbourhood of Delhi (February 1757) he marched against the Jat country under Suraj Mal's rule. The Jat chief took refuge in his strong fort of Kumbher. Abdali captured Ballabgarh, defeated Suraj Mal's son Jawahir Singh at Chaumuha, sacked Mathura and attacked Gokul. The massacre at Mathura was terrible. Agra was plundered. 'From Agra to Delhi not a man was left in any hamlet. Along the route by which Abdali came and went back not two seers of grain and fodder could be had'.

After the depredations Abdali retired from India (April

1757). The plunder that he carried away was valued by contemporary reporters at three to twelve *crores* of rupees.

Virtual extinction of Mughal Empire

In 1753 the effete Emperor Ahmad Shah dismissed his *wazir* Safdar Jang, and there was desultory warfare between the forces of the Emperor and the fallen *wazir* for a few months. The *wazir*, Itimaduddaula, and his rival, the *mir bakshi* (paymaster of forces) Imad-ul-Mulk, dominated imperial politics. Ahmad Shah was overthrown in 1754 by Imad-ul-Mulk who became *wazir* and placed on the throne another imperial figurehead, Alamgir II, the youngest son of Jahandar Shah. Abdali's invasion of 1756-57 inflicted serious humiliation on the Emperor and the *wazir*, and Najibuddaula became the conqueror's supreme agent at the Mughal capital. Imad-ul-Mulk's hostility towards the Emperor's eldest son Ali Gauhar compelled him to leave Delhi and take shelter in Oudh (1758). The arrogant and power-hungry *wazir* then murdered Alamgir II (November 1759) and enthroned a grandson of Aurangzib's youngest son Kam Bakhsh with the title of Shah Jahan III. Ali Gauhar, however, proclaimed himself Emperor in his camp (December 1759). After the occupation of Delhi by the Marathas in 1760 Sadashiv Rao Bhau deposed Shah Jahan III and proclaimed Ali Gauhar as Emperor under the title of Shah Alam II (October 1760). After the third battle of Panipat (1761) Abdali recognized Shah Alam as Emperor; but as he was a refugee in Oudh, Najibuddaula, as Abdali's agent, became the dictator of Delhi and the supreme controller of the affairs of the empire. He maintained this position till his death in 1770.

From the death of Alamgir II (1759) the legal right to the imperial crown belonged to Shah Alam, but he had not the power to function as Emperor or even to come back to Delhi. Till 1764 he remained a protege of the Nawab of Oudh, Shuja-uddaula, who was his nominal *wazir*. After the battle of Buxar (1764) he became a protege of the English East India Company and lived peacefully at Allahabad for six years (1765-71). He returned to Delhi in 1772 and lived virtually as a prisoner in the hands of one or the other of the parties contending for power at the imperial court. In 1788 he was blinded by an Afghan chief named Ghulam Kadir. Then he became a protege of Mahadji Sindhia (1788) and his successor, Daulat Rao Sindhia. After the occupation of Delhi by the English East India Company in 1803 he came under its protection. This was really

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the formal extinction of the Mughal Empire; but dynastic continuity was maintained after Shah Alam's death (1806) by his son and grandson—Akbar II (1806-37) and Bahadur Shah II (1837-57)—till the dust of a century was swept away by the 'Sepoy Mutiny'.

3. INDEPENDENT PROVINCES

B'engal

Murshid Kuli Khan, a South Indian Brahmin convert to Islam, was educated in Persia. He served his apprenticeship in Mughal administration in the Deccan, and having won Aurang-zib's confidence by honest and efficient discharge of his duties, was appointed *diwan* of the Bengal *subah* in 1700. In 1701 he added to his Bengal charge the *diwani* of Orissa, and in 1704 the *diwani* of Bihar was added to these two charges. He kept the Emperor satisfied by regular transmission of large amounts of money for the Deccan War. As a result of disagreement with the *subahdar* Azim-ush-shan, the Emperor's grandson, he transferred the *diwani* office from Dacca, the provincial capital, to Maqsudabad on the Ganges. The name of the city was later changed to Murshidabad. It remained the capital of Bengal till the transfer of the provincial treasury to Calcutta by Warren Hastings in 1773 although the puppet Nawabs continued to live in their ancestral seat.

Murshid Kuli Khan became *subahdar* of Orissa in 1714 and *subahdar* of Bengal in 1717. While continuing to profess allegiance to the Emperors he governed Bengal independently, appointing all officers—including the *diwan*—and making land-revenue settlements according to his own discretion. The Mughal system of controlling the civil administration of the *subahs* through *diwans* appointed by the Emperor came to an end; the functions of the *subahdar* and the *diwan* were henceforth united in Bengal in a single person, for the *diwan* was appointed by, and remained responsible to, the *subahdar*.

Murshid Kuli Khan's administration is memorable for his comprehensive revision of the land-revenue settlement (1722) which had been made during Shah Shuja's viceroyalty (1658) in the reign of Shah Jahan. He tried to restrict the privileges which the English traders claimed under Farrukh-siyar's *farman* of 1717.

Murshid Kuli Khan was succeeded as *subahdar* of Bengal and Orissa on his death (1727) by his son-in-law, Shujauddin

Khan. The provincial governorship became hereditary; the Emperor, Muhammad Shah, not only confirmed the succession on receipt of presents, but also recognized the new *subahdar* as the *subahdar* of Bihar (1733). Thus Shujauddin became the ruler of three provinces: Bengal, Orissa and Bihar. He sent to the Imperial Government a large annual tribute. He asserted his authority over the European traders. His administration was 'moderate, firm and vigilant'; but in his later years he succumbed to dissipation, and power passed into the hands of a 'triumvirate' consisting of Haji Ahmad, Alamchand and Jagat Seth Fateh Chand (a Marwari banker).

Shujauddin Khan was succeeded in 1739 by his son Sarfaraz Khan who was weak in character and addicted to luxury. With the co-operation of the 'triumvirate' Alivardi Khan, the deputy governor of Bihar, who was Haji Ahmad's younger brother, rose against the young Nawab, defeated and killed him in the battle of Giria (in the Murshidabad district, West Bengal) and seized the *masnad* (April 1740). He secured imperial confirmation of his usurpation through bribery and fraud.

Bengal had enjoyed peace under Murshid Kuli Khan and Shujauddin Khan, but Alivardi Khan's reign (1740-56) was disturbed by frequent military operations. He had to subjugate Orissa by force of arms (1741). The Nawab of Oudh, Safdar Jang, entered Bihar and occupied Patna for a time (1742). The Afghans of Bihar rose in revolt twice (1745, 1748) and received support from Afghan adventurers of different parts of North India. The Marathas, however, constituted the greatest menace to the security of Alivardi Khan's dominions.

There were five Maratha invasions (1742, 1743, 1744, 1745, 1748). 'The north-eastern push of the Marathas was a phase of their triumphant imperialism in the pre-Panipat era'. Raghuji Bhonsle, the virtually independent chief of Nagpur, found in the rich province of Bengal a profitable field for plunder and extension of his political influence. In 1742 his general Bhaskar Ram invaded Bengal; his troops ravaged the western districts of Bengal as also parts of Bihar and Orissa. The tale of their atrocities, described by contemporary Bengali writers, figures in popular tradition even today. In 1743 Raghuji Bhonsle himself merched at the head of a large army on the plea of realizing the *chauth* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa; and at the same time Peshwa Balaji Rao entered Bihar at the head of another Maratha army, ostensibly to expel his rival Raghuji. Alivardi

Khan conciliated the Peshwa by promising payment of *chauth* to the Maratha King Shahu and by making an immediate payment of 22 *lakhs* of rupees. The allied troops of the Nawab and the Peshwa expelled Raghuji Bhonsle, and the Peshwa left Bengal (1743). But Bhaskar Ram came again in 1744; Alivardi Khan got rid of him by treacherous murder, and his troops fled. Next year (1745) Raghuji Bhonsle led another expedition to Bengal, but he was defeated by the Nawab's troops and forced to retreat to Nagpur. In 1748 a Maratha army from Nagpur, led by Janoji Bhonsle, advanced into Bengal; the operations continued till 1751. Final peace was concluded by a treaty (1751); the river Subarnarekha was fixed as the boundary of the Bengal *subah*, and Orissa was ceded to the Bhonsle ruler. The Maratha raids into Bengal from Orissa continued for many years, but there was no serious invasion after 1751.

Apart from territorial loss, the Nawab of Bengal suffered serious economic loss; agriculture, industry, trade and commerce were dislocated, and an era of economic decline commenced. There was social dislocation as well, for a large number of people migrated from the ravaged western districts of Bengal to the northern and eastern districts. The English merchants at Calcutta took measures for the defence of the town against apprehended Maratha raids and provided shelter for many people. This earned for them the good will and confidence of the indigenous population.

Alivardi was generally conciliatory towards the European traders; but he was aware of their growing strength, and the political developments connected with the Anglo-French conflict in the Deccan alarmed him lest 'similar enterprises' should disturb his own dominions. His fear materialised soon after his death (1756) in the brief reign of his successor Sirajuddaula (1756-57).

Oudh

The *subah* of Oudh, extending from the Kanauj district in the west to the river Karmanasa in the east, was a large and prosperous region. It became virtually independent in 1722 when a Persian Shia adventurer named Sa'adat Khan was appointed its governor by Muhammad Shah. He was a newcomer in India, arriving at Patna in 1708. He became *subahdar* of Agra in 1720 and was transferred to Oudh two years later. He not only suppressed the powerful landlords of Oudh but also added to his *subah*—by diplomacy and force—several fertile

districts in the east and south-east, including the principality of Benares. As a leading member of the Irani party he had a powerful rival, Asaf Jah Nizam-ul-Mulk, who was a leader of the Turani party at the imperial court. He played a crucial role in imperial affairs during the crisis of Nadir Shah's invasion and committed suicide 'to save his name and honour' (March 1739).

Sa'adat Khan's successor in the government of Oudh was his nephew and son-in-law, Abul Mansur Khan Safdar Jang. As in Bengal, the governorship of Oudh became hereditary. He led an army to Bihar and occupied Patna for some time (1742). In 1744 he became a minister of the Emperor; the leadership of the Irani party at the imperial court fell upon him. He led a practically unsuccessful expedition against the Rohillas (1745), took part in the battle of Manupur against Ahmad Shah Abdali (1748), and received appointment as *wazir* from the Emperor Ahmad Shah (1748). Not endowed with the high quality of constructive statesmanship, he involved himself in court politics and faced serious opposition from the Turani party. He undertook expeditions against the Jats and the Bangash Afghans of Farrukhabad. Troubled by enemies on all sides, he entered into an alliance with the Maratha chiefs, Jayappa Sindhia and Malhar Rao Holkar. In 1753 the Emperor dismissed him from the office of *wazir*. After unsuccessful armed resistance to the imperial forces he retired to Oudh where he died in 1754.

Safdar Jang's successor in the governorship of Oudh was his son Shujauddaula. When the hostility of the Turani *wazir*, Imad-ul-Mulk, drove Ali Gauhar (Shah Alam), the heir-apparent of the puppet Emperor Alamgir II, to seek safety outside Delhi, he was received at Lucknow by Shujauddaula (1759). In the conflict between Ahmad Shah Abdali and the Marathas which culminated in the third battle of Panipat (1761) Shujauddaula was an ally of the Afghan invader. His involvement in the struggle between the English and the deposed Nawab of Bengal, Mir Kasim, led to his defeat by the former in the battle of Buxar (1764). In his last years Oudh was virtually a subordinate ally of the East India Company.

The Rohillas

The establishment of two independent principalities in the present Uttar Pradesh by two Afghan (Pathan) groups—the Rohillas and the Bangash—was made possible by the decline of

the Mughal Empire. Their history was closely linked with that of Oudh.

The adopted home of the Rohillās was Katehar, the land of turbulent Rajput chiefs situated on the left bank of the Ganges and stretching to the foot of the Himalayas. At the time of Aurangzib's death the entire region was in a state of anarchy. Taking advantage of the disturbances created by the local chieftains and the ruler of Kumaun, Daud Khan, a Rohilla adventurer of unknown origin, made himself the leader of many armed men and the revenue-farmer of several villages. Early in Muhammad Shah's reign he was cruelly murdered for his treachery. His adopted son Ali Muhammad, a Jat convert, continued the lucrative practice of military adventure, sometimes in alliance with, and sometimes in opposition to local chiefs. In 1742 the Mughal Government, almost completely disintegrated by Nadir Shah's invasion, left entire Katehar to be governed by him. His territory touched the Ganges on the one side and ran parallel to Oudh on the east. On the north he extended it to its natural hill-frontier by the conquest of Kumaun. Throughout the region 'Islamic custom and law were made current'. 'The new State was intended to promote the happiness of the Pathans'.

Ali Muhammad's successes excited the jealousy and fears of Safdar Jang of Oudh. Hostilities followed, resulting in the temporary eclipse of the Rohilla power and the restoration of imperial rule in Katehar (1745). After serving for some time as *faujdar* of Sirhind Ali Muhammad took advantage of the first invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali (1747), returned to Katehar and re-established himself there. He died in 1748, leaving the government of Katehar in the hands of his chiefs: Hafiz Rahmat Khan, Daud Khan, Sardar Khan, Fath Khan and others. Safdar Jang, who was then imperial *wazir*, used Qaim Khan, the Bangash chief of Farrukhabad, as the 'instrument of his vengeance' against the Rohillas. But Qaim Khan's invasion of Katehar failed; he was killed, and the Bangash territories to the north of the Ganges were annexed by the Rohillas. Safdar Jang then sought the aid of the Marathas who were at the time expanding their activities in Northern India. Along with Malhar Rao Holkar he crossed the Ganges and overran the Rohilla lands. But Poona was menaced by the impending invasion of Nizam-ul-Mulk, and news was received of a fresh invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali. These unforeseen developments compelled Mal-

har Rao Holkar and Safdar Jang to retreat after making peace on terms favourable to the Rohillas.

Peace prevailed during the next few years and Hafiz Rahmat Khan utilised it in extending the boundaries of the Rohilla principality. A new Rohilla chief, Najibuddaula, who had entered the service of Ali Muhammad as a trooper, rose into prominence in Delhi politics, and played an important role in the third battle of Panipat as Ahmad Shah Abdali's ally. As the Afghan conqueror's representative in India he remained the virtual dictator of Delhi for a decade (1761-70). He established his estate in Saharanpur, built the fort of Najafgarh and founded Najibabad. His possessions extended on the northern side of the Ganges and ran alongside of Katehar (Rohilkhand). Hafiz Rahmat Khan's son received from Abdali the districts of Etawa and Shikohabad which had been wrested from the Marathas.

This period recorded the high watermark of Afghan power in Uttar Pradesh. The two Rohilla chiefs—Hafiz Rahmat Khan and Najibuddaula—and the Bangash Nawab of Farrukhabad (who ruled over a large part of the Doab) occupied a position which threatened the security of Oudh under Shujauddaula and barred the way of Maratha expansion in the upper Gangetic region. After the battle of Buxar (1764) and the treaty of Allahabad (1765) which brought Oudh within the East India Company's sphere of influence the English also had to take interest in Rohilla affairs. The result was the conquest of the Rohilla State in 1774 by Shujauddaula with English military aid.

After Najibuddaula's death (1770) his territories were laid waste, and his family at Najafgarh captured, by the Marathas.

Bangash Afghans

Farrukhabad was assigned by Farrukh-siyar to Muhammad Khan Bangash, an Afghan soldier of fortune, as a *faujdari*. As the Central Government of Delhi disintegrated he began to exercise independent authority. After his death Safdar Jang of Oudh used his son and successor Qaim Khan as the 'instrument of his vengeance' against the Rohillas. His purpose was to bring about the destruction of one Pathan State by another. Urged by Safdar Jang, Qaim Khan invaded Rohilla territory; but he was defeated and killed, and the Bangash territory to the north of the Ganges was annexed by the Rohillas. Safdar Jang's next step was to invade the Bangash territory (1750). He was defeated by Qaim Khan's younger brother Ahmad Khan

who, emboldened by this success, besieged the fort of Allahabad—unsuccessfully—to destroy the power of Safdar Jang in his own dominions. Then followed a joint attack by Safdar Jang and his Maratha allies (Malhar Rao Holkar and Jayappa Sindhia) resulting in Ahmad Khan's defeat. In 1752 Farrukhabad and several other *mahals* were left to Ahmad Khan and his brothers. He joined Ahmad Shah Abdali in the third battle of Panipat (1761). After his death his successor Muzaffar Jang was confirmed in possession of Farrukhabad by Shah Alam II.

Hyderabad

Khwaja Abid, who claimed descent from Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, came to India from Bukhara towards the close of Shah Jahan's reign and, after long years in imperial service, fell in the siege of Golkunda in 1687. His eldest son, Ghaziuddin Khan Firuz Jang, rose to be the governor of Berar and Gujarat. His eldest son, Mir Qamruddin (later known as Chin Kilich Khan, Nizam-ul-Mulk, Asaf Jah), had his early experience of military operations and administration in the Deccan in the later years of Aurangzib's reign. He held the viceroyalty of the Deccan once in 1713-14 and again from 1720 to 1722. In 1722 he came to Delhi to take up the office of *wazir*, but he retained the viceroyalty of the Deccan and exercised its functions through agents. In 1724, in despair of reforming the imperial administration, he set out for the Deccan. His political enemies in Delhi, anxious to destroy his position in the Deccan, urged his deputy Mubariz Khan to usurp power there. But Nizam-ul-Mulk defeated and killed Mubariz Khan in the village of Sakarkheda in Berar (1724). This victory established his virtual independence from the control of the effete central authority in Delhi. Next year the Emperor Muhammad Shah confirmed him in the viceroyalty of the Deccan.

Nizam-ul-Mulk ruled the Mughal Deccan independently till his death in 1748. He continued to profess his allegiance to Delhi; coins were issued, and the *khutba* was read, in the name of the Emperor, and even the scarlet umbrella was not used by the all-powerful viceroy. Nadir Shah, disgusted with the imbecility of Muhammad Shah, offered the throne of Delhi to Nizam-ul-Mulk, but he refused to be disloyal to his master.

Nizam-ul-Mulk was not only 'the foremost general of his time in India' and a careful and honest administrator, but also a master of statecraft and diplomacy. 'He was universally regarded as the sole representative of the spacious times of Aurang-

zib and of the policy and traditions of that strenuous monarch'. The rich provinces under his administration prospered during his long reign. The refractory chiefs, ambitious officers and robber leaders were suppressed. The revenue assessment was moderate, and taxation was such as to promote trade.

Nizam-ul-Mulk's relations with the Marathas will be described in the next chapter. Claiming the full territorial legacy of Aurangzib in the Deccan, modified only by Sayyid Husain Ali's agreement with Balaji Vishwanath, he planned to restrict the political authority of the Marathas to Shivaji's small possessions in their homeland. What followed was 'the inevitable clash between a legitimate but static authority and the dynamic spirit of expansion of a new people trying to find its place in the sun'. The clash culminated in the victory of the Marathas. In his later years they raided eastern Karnatak and penetrated into the Kanarese country southwards (Savanur, Bednor, etc.). In the north-east the Bhonsles of Nagpur subjugated the Gond chiefs and encroached upon the Mughal province of Berar. While upholding the Mughal claim Nizam-ul-Mulk did not forget Aurangzib's failure to crush the Maratha people. As a political realist he 'recognised the basic truth that the Marathas were the basic landowners of the Deccan and that the Mughal governor of that country must cultivate their friendship if he was to live at all'. On his death bed he advised his son Nasir Jang to live on good terms with the Marathas.

Nizam-ul-Mulk went to Delhi in 1737 in response to the Emperor's invitation to meet the impending crisis of Nadir Shah's invasion. After the disaster at Karnal Nizam-ul-Mulk's arrangement with the conqueror for peace on payment of an indemnity of 50 *lakhs* was sabotaged by Sa'adat Khan. As a result Delhi suffered the horrors of massacre and plunder. Leaving Delhi in 1740 Nizam-ul-Mulk returned to the Deccan and suppressed the rebellion of his second son Nasir Jang whom he had left as his deputy for the government of his dominions.

The affairs of Karnatak demanded Nizam-ul-Mulk's attention in the early forties. This rich province, with its capital at Arcot, was governed by an Arab family which simultaneously offended the two leading powers in the Deccan: the Marathas and Nizam-ul-Mulk. To the former was denied payment of annual compensation for Shivaji's territories and forts in that region. From the latter was withheld payment of the surplus revenue due to the Emperor's chief representative in the Deccan.

Moreover, in 1737 Chanda Saheb, the son-in-law of the Nawab of Arcot, Dost Ali, seized Trichinopoly and other places in the Maratha Kingdom of Tanjore. In 1740 a Maratha army led by the Bhonsles invaded Arcot, defeated and killed Dost Ali, and compelled his successor Safdar Ali to promise a large indemnity. Next year they occupied Trichinopoly, made Chanda Saheb a prisoner, and left Murari Rao Ghorpare as their governor there. In 1742 Safdar Ali was murdered by his cousin Murtaza Ali. Karnatak fell into anarchy and 'every commander of a district assumed the title of Nawab'.

Early in 1743 Nizam-ul-Mulk invaded Karnatak with a vast army. His success was spectacular. After establishing his authority at Arcot, he captured Trichinopoly from Murari Rao by siege, took a large indemnity from the Maratha Raja of Tanjore, deposed the family of Safdar Ali, and installed his own agent Anwaruddin as Nawab of Arcot. Returning to Aurangabad in 1744, he died four years later.

Nizam-ul-Mulk's death was followed by a war of succession which became linked with the Anglo-French conflict in the Deccan. Political stability was restored in 1762 by the accession of Nizam Ali who had a long reign of more than four decades.

4. HINDU STATES

Decadence of Rajputs

The Rajput princes took advantage of the disintegration of the Mughal Empire to a very limited extent. Some of them tried to seize portions of imperial domains which were contiguous to their own territories. Some, again, exercised considerable influence on imperial politics as associates of political groups in Delhi. But the bold idea of subverting the Mughal Empire itself never crossed their minds.

The clan system still shaped the political ideas of the Rajputs, although they had long and intimate contact with a vast imperial structure in which clans, races and religions were mobilised in the service of a political system. Their outlook was essentially parochial. Clan traditions fostered isolation, rivalry and conflict. Unity of clans was out of the question, for a political structure incorporating different clans was looked upon as an arrangement for improper subordination of one clan to another. The disappearance of imperial authority intensified clan rivalry; there was no longer imperial control over inter-

State disputes, and every State was free to strike at its neighbours. As the imperial authority no longer regulated succession, succession disputes led to civil wars which often invited external intervention.

The situation was worsened by the expansionist policy of the Marathas. Instead of using the Rajput princes as useful allies, as the Great Mughals had done, the Marathas exploited them for money and fostered dissensions among them to serve their own ends. To them the desert of Rajasthan appeared to be as fertile a source of supply as the rich Doab and the smiling plains of Bengal.

Marwar

The two leading Rajput clans at the beginning of Bahadur Shah's reign (1707-12) were the Rathors (of Marwar and Bikaner) and the Kachchhwas (of Amber). The Rathor ruler of Marwar, Ajit Singh, who was the centre of the thirty years' war against Aurangzib, made peace with Bahadur Shah. He rose against Mughal authority during the confusion which followed that Emperor's death. Peace was made in 1714, and one of his daughters was given in marriage to Farrukh-siyar. During the following years he was engaged in political manoeuvres and intrigues in the imperial court. He co-operated with the Sayyid brothers in the overthrow of Farrukh-siyar, and the people of Delhi called him *damad kush* (slayer of son-in-law). He served as imperial governor of Gujarat and Ajmer. In 1724 he was murdered by his second son Bakht Singh.

Ajit Singh's eldest son, Abhai Singh, ruled over Marwar till his death in 1749. He served as imperial governor of Gujarat. His invasion of the Rathor principality of Bikaner involved him in a struggle with the latter's ally, Sawai Jai Singh of Amber. Abhai Singh secured a complete victory in the battle of Gangwana (1741). This battle marks an important stage in the growth of that Rathor-Kachchhwa rivalry which had begun in the seventeenth century and continued to be 'the dominating factor of Rajput society' even during the period of British rule.

With the death of Abhai Singh Marwar lost its internal political stability. The State suffered from a protracted civil war on the issue of succession. During the long reign of Bijay Singh (1752-92) Marwar came to the verge of dissolution. For this two important factors were responsible apart from the war

of succession: Maratha invasions, and the growing power of the turbulent Rathor nobility.

Amber (Jaipur)

The greatest Rajput ruler of the first half of the eighteenth century was Sawai Jai Singh of Amber (1699-1743). Tod recorded his appreciation of this Kachchhwa prince 'as a statesman, legislator, and man of science'. He founded a new capital city (Jaipur) which was built according to a novel technique of town planning unknown in India in those days. Tod noticed that Jaipur was 'the only city in India built upon a regular plan, with streets bisecting each other at right angles'. Sawai Jai Singh's intellectual curiosity shows that the spirit of scientific enquiry was not dead in India even in that age of disintegration. While building the new city of Jaipur he utilized the plans of several European cities which he had collected. He was deeply interested in mathematics and astronomy. Not satisfied with Indian mathematics only, he studied Greek and modern European treatises on the subject. At his instance some Greek and European works on mathematics and some Arabic works on astronomy were translated into Sanskrit. He built well-equipped observatories in Jaipur, Delhi, Ujjain, Benares and Mathura. For the purpose of constructing these observatories he invited to Jaipur the Jesuit Father Boudier from Bengal as also Father Andre Strobl and Antoine Gabelsperguer from Germany. He established contact with the King of Portugal and procured astronomical tables from that country which, however, he found inferior to his own tables.

Sawai Jai Singh played an important role in imperial politics and served as *subahdar* of Agra and Malwa; but he made little contribution to the preservation of the disintegrating empire. Faced with the virtually impossible task of resisting the Marathas in Malwa, he only made a show of fighting and preferred the policy of buying them off for the time with a part of the money given him (by the Mughal Government), pocketing the balance ...'. As *subahdar* of Agra he used his power and influence in extending and consolidating his hereditary domains. He intervened in a disputed succession in Bundi in pursuance of his aggressive policy. He was defeated by the Rathors in the battle of Gangwana (1714). He is said to have performed the *asvamedha* sacrifice which was regarded in ancient India as a declaration of imperial authority. He was interested in social reform; but his attempt to prevent female

infanticide—a widely prevalent evil in Rajput society—failed.

The virtual extinction of Mughal authority in Gujarat and Malwa in the early years of Muhammad Shah's reign exposed Rajasthan to Maratha incursions. The first Maratha invasion of Rajasthan took place in 1734. The collapse of imperial authority as a result of Nadir Shah's invasion opened the door for systematic Maratha intervention in the affairs of Rajasthan, and internecine disputes in several Rajput States offered good excuses. Ishwari Singh (1743-50), Sawai Jai Singh's eldest son and successor, had to commit suicide because he failed to resist a Maratha invasion of Jaipur in support of his brother Madho Singh's claim to the throne. Madho Singh adopted an anti-Maratha policy after his accession to the throne.

Mewar

In pre-Mughal times Mewar enjoyed political primacy among the Rajput States, and its ruler was entitled to the highest social prestige in the community of the Rajput princes. Sangram Singh, Babur's antagonist, was known as *Hindupat*. After his defeat at Khanua (1527), and his death soon afterwards (1528), Mewar was weakened by internal dissensions and external invasions. Its long resistance to Akbar and Jahangir, and its self-chosen isolation from the imperial court after its acceptance of Mughal suzerainty in 1615, lowered its position; Amber and Marwar acquired primacy in the Mughal political system. In the seventeenth century the only capable ruler of Mewar was Raj Singh who fought against Aurangzib in the thirty years' war in Marwar.

In the eighteenth century Mewar's weak rulers were unable to control the ambitious and factious nobility and to resist external invasions. During the reign of Sangram Singh II (1710-33) symptoms of internal disintegration came to the surface. In 1736—during the reign of Jagat Singh II (1734-51)—began the long era of Maratha depredations which ended only with the submission of Mewar to British suzerainty in 1818. Tod's exaggerated description of the Marathas as 'associations of vampires, who drained the very life blood wherever the scent of spoil attracted them', is not entirely devoid of truth.

Jat Kingdom

The Jats of the Agra-Mathura region rose in rebellion several times during the reign of Aurangzib under successive leaders: Gokla, Rajaram, Churaman (1695-1721). Starting his

career as a free-booter, Churaman built a mud fort which subsequently came to be known as Bharatpur. He was a good organizer. He added to his military strength by recruiting musketeers and a troop of cavalry. He professed allegiance to Bahadur Shah and co-operated with the imperial forces in the military operations against the Rajputs and the Sikhs. But he continued his depredations, built a fortress at Thun, and provoked several attempts to suppress him on the part of the Mughal Government during the reigns of Farrukh-siyar and Muhammad Shah.

After Churaman's death his brother's son, Badan Singh (1721-56), was recognized as chief of the Jats by the Mughal Government. The fortress of Thun was captured by the imperial forces in 1722. 'There was as yet no Jat State, no politically united Jat nation, no Jat King'. Badan Singh tactfully declared himself publicly as a mere vassal of the Raja of Amber (Jaipur) and styled himself *Thakur*. But he united the scattered groups of the Jats, brought under his control the lands held by the Jat village headmen, and increased his power by entering into matrimonial relations with some influential families of Mathura. He organized a strong army, consisting of infantry and cavalry, and constructed four forts—Dig, Kumbher, Ver, Bharatpur—which were well protected by artillery. Before his death the Mughal Emperor Ahmad Shah created him a Raja with the title of *Mahendra*.

Badan Singh was succeeded by his adopted son Suraj Mal (1756-63). He was a man of exceptional ability, and he had acquired political and military experience during his father's last years. By rendering useful services to the imperial *wazir* Safdar Jang he had secured appointment as *faujdar* of Mathura. 'This gave him the governorship of most of the territory on the two sides of the Jumna in the province of Agra and the environs of that city for an annual tribute'. After his accession his territory suffered twice from the merciless depredations of Ahmad Shah Abdali (1757, 1760). He did not join the Marathas in the third battle of Panipat; but even at the risk of offending Abdali he provided food and shelter to the Maratha fugitives who entered his territory after the disaster.

In the post-Panipat years Suraj Mal occupied extensive territories in the Doab, in the Aligarh and Bulandshahr districts, in the Agra district and in the present Hariyana State. He was killed prematurely in a contest with the Rohilla chief Najib-

uddaula. He lived in a period of political turmoil, but he remained 'the strongest potentate in India with absolutely unimpaired forces and an overflowing treasury, while every other chief had been more or less ruined'. His annual revenue amounted to 175 *lakhs*, and he left a reserve fund of ten *crores*. At the time of his death his army consisted of 15,000 cavalry and 25,000 infantry, besides fort garrisons.

5. SIKH WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

Martyrdom of Guru Gobind Singh

Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708), the tenth and last Guru of the Sikhs, was born in 1666. He succeeded his father Tegh Bahadur, who was cruelly executed by Aurangzib in 1675, as the leader of the Sikh *Panth*. He fought for many years against the Hill Rajas of the Punjab and the Mughals. Invited by Aurangzib to meet him in the Deccan, he proceeded to South India. On the way he received the news of the Emperor's death. He returned to the North, joined Bahadur Shah, and travelled to the South with him when he proceeded to fight against Kam Bakhsh. At Nander the Guru was murdered by an unknown Pathan in October 1708. The assassin was probably an agent of the Mughal *faujdar* of Sirhind who was responsible for the cruel murder of the Guru's two sons.

Guru Gobind's mission was to 'spread the faith, save the saints, and extirpate all tyrants'. He recommended the use of force when all other methods failed. The Sikhs had been trained to use arms for self-defence by the sixth Guru Har Gobind in the early decades of the seventeenth century. Guru Gobind declared *dharm yudh* (war for righteousness) to be an obligatory duty. In 1699 he created the *Khalsa*, a specially baptized group of Sikhs for whom a special code of conduct was prescribed. They were always to wear *kes* (long hair), *kangha* (a comb), *kirpan* (a sword), *kachh* (short drawers) and *kara* (a steel bracelet). They were to give up all caste practices and use the common surname of *Singh*. They were to avoid social and matrimonial relations with those who were smokers as also those who killed their infant daughters. They were to practise the use of arms and never to show their backs to the enemy in battle. They were to have unflinching faith in One God.

The birth of the *Khalsa* marked the emergence of a compact, democratic, fearless community, free from the traditional subservience to meaningless religious rituals as also demorali-

zing superstitions and social practices. Guru Gobind felt that such a community did not require the direct personal guidance of a human Guru. Before his death he declared that no individual would henceforth be recognized as Guru; the *Khalsa*, inspired and guided by the teachings of the Gurus incorporated in the sacred scripture (the *Granth* compiled by the fifth Guru Arjan in 1604), would guide and control the activities of the *Panth*.

Guru Gobind did not aim at the overthrow of the Mughal regime and the establishment of the temporal power of the *Panth*. In his *Zafarnama*, a letter addressed to Aurangzib in 1705, he condemns the Emperor as 'a perjurer, a worshipper of self, and a breaker of faith'. But he does not challenge the Emperor's temporal authority, nor does he claim temporal authority for himself as head of the *Panth*. He accepted Bahadur Shah as Emperor and associated with him as a 'companion'.

Banda (1708-16)

After the death of Guru Gobind Singh and the abolition of the Guruship the political leadership of the Sikhs fell upon Banda. Born in Kashmir in a Rajput farmer family and known as Lachman Das, he adopted asceticism, became a *bairagi* and took the name of Madho Das. Wandering from place to place, he went to the Deccan and established a monastery at Nander. There he met Guru Gobind Singh just before his death, and was sent to the Punjab to continue the struggle against the Mughals. He came to be known as Banda Singh. This is the generally accepted version of the circumstances leading to the rise of this obscure man to the position of the commander of the *Khalsa*. There are other traditions. For instance, it is said that after Guru Gobind Singh's death 'his followers produced a man who exactly resembled him and secretly sent him to the Punjab, declaring that he was Guru Gobind, miraculously brought back to life for leading his followers in a war of independence against the Muslims'.

When Banda arrived in the Punjab he called upon the Sikhs to join him, telling them that he would punish Wazir Khan, the *faujdar* of Sirhind, who had cruelly murdered Guru Gobind Singh's two sons, and chastise the Hill Rajas who had fought against the Guru for many years. The Sikh peasantry took up arms and marched under Banda's leadership in the direction of Sirhind. On the way he plundered and devastated several important places, including Samana and Sadhaura.

Wazir Khan met him with a large force, but he was killed and the entire Muslim army was destroyed in a battle fought on the plain of Chappar-Chiri (May 1710). The city of Sirhind was taken two days later; an enormous booty fell into the hands of the Sikhs. The city was partly destroyed and a curse was attached to it. 'Even now a pious Sikh, when travelling to the north or south of Sirhind, may be seen pulling out a brick or two from its ruins and conveying the same to the waters of the Sutlej or the Jumna'.

The entire district of Sirhind, extending from Karnal to Ludhiana and yielding a revenue of about 35 *lakhs*, came under Sikh administration; the Mughal officers in charge of different districts submitted to Banda without striking a blow. He established his headquarters at Mukhlispur, near Sadhaura, and repairing its old fort, named it Lohgarh (Iron Castle). He assumed the position of a King, counting his regnal year from the date of his conquest of Sirhind, and issuing a seal for his official documents. But he did not assume any royal title, and in his seal he attributed his power to his Master. The inscription on the seal ran as follows: 'The Kettle and the Sword, and Victory and ready Patronage, have been obtained from Guru Nanak-Gobind Singh'. (The Kettle and the Sword were symbols of charity and political-cum-military power. All Gurus called themselves Nanak because, according to the Sikh view, the spirit of every Guru was projected into his successor's body).

Banda removed the *zamindars* and the tillers of the soil became its masters. Every Sikh felt that he was now superior to others and entitled to rule over them. 'In all the *parganas* occupied by the Sikhs the reversal of the previous customs was striking and complete. A low scavenger or leather-dresser ... had only to leave home and join Banda, when in a short time he would return to his birth-place as its ruler with his order of appointment in his hand'. Naturally this new political order was a signal for a general rising of the Sikhs against the Mughals. 'They started on a career of conquest, and every method, including loot and sabotage, which would cripple the resources of the enemy, was considered justified'.

After invading the Gangetic Doab and occupying a large tract in the Saharanpur area, Banda retreated to the Jullundur Doab where his presence provoked a general rebellion of the Sikhs against Mughal authority. By the end of 1710 Jullun-

dur and Hoshiarpur were occupied without striking a blow. The Sikh rising spread to the Central Punjab and took the form of a religious crusade. The *Manjha* fell into Sikh hands, and the Sikhs carried their arms to the very walls of Lahore.

The reports of the Sikh rebellion alarmed the Emperor Bahadur Shah, who sent a large force against Banda. Lohgarh fell into Mughal hands (December 1710), but Banda fled to the hills of Nahan. The struggle continued; the Sikhs won temporary successes, and the Mughal Government tried to crush them by savage persecution.

Bahadur Shah's death (February 1712), followed by the weak rule of Jahandar Shah and his overthrow by Farrukhsiyar (January 1713), offered a favourable opportunity to Banda to restore his control over the lost territories. Descending from the hills, he occupied Sadhaura and Lohgarh. Under Farrukhsiyar's order Abdus Samad Khan and his son Zakariya Khan, governor of Lahore and *faujdar* of Jammu respectively, commenced operations against the Sikhs. Obligated to evacuate Sadhaura and Lohgarh (October 1713), Banda took refuge in the Jammu hills. Early in 1715 he returned to the plains; he occupied Kalanaur and Batala. Once again Abdus Samad Khan advanced against the Sikhs. Banda was driven to entrench himself at the village of Gurdas-Nangal (near Gurdaspur). Besieged by the Mughal army, unable to collect provisions, his troops suffered extremes of hunger. In eight months about 8,000 died and the remaining fighters were reduced to skeletons. The imperial troops forced their entry into the improvised fort; Banda and his famished followers were taken prisoners (December 1715). Taken to Delhi, they were killed with terrible torture. Banda died a heroic death (9 June 1716).

The writers of Persian historical chronicles condemned Banda as 'one of the most sanguinary of monsters' and recorded terrible details of atrocities committed by the Sikhs under his leadership. But, as a British historian says, 'a Mohammedan writer is not to be implicitly trusted upon such a point'. While witnessing the horrible torture inflicted on Banda at the time of his execution Muhammad Amin Khan was impressed by his 'acuteness and nobility'. He stood unmoved because he had resigned himself completely to the will of God. This was possible because he was a staunch adherent of Guru Gobind Singh and a firm believer in his mission. His zeal for his faith and

his interest in its propagation did not make him a persecutor of Islam. According to a Mughal news-writer, Banda declared in 1711 that Muslims joining his army would enjoy full religious liberty.

Banda converted the *Khalsa* into a political instrument for pulling down the Mughal imperial structure. It was during his stormy career that the slogan *Raj karega Khalsa* (the *Khalsa* will rule) became the battle-cry of the Sikhs. The establishment of Sikh rule in the occupied territories was a definite bid for political power. It was a revolutionary step without any precedent in Sikh history. 'The sixth and the tenth Gurus (Har Gobind and Gobind) had taught their disciples to fight in battle and to destroy the awe inspired by the Mughal despotism; but their objectives being always defensive they withstood the temptation of acquiring territory, making prisoners or wresting wealth from the enemy'.

Banda failed to achieve his object because 'the Mughal *Raj* was deeply rooted and its power was not yet exhausted'. He mobilized the enthusiasm of the Sikh masses, but the upper classes—even when they were not hostile—dared not come out openly to help him. The Bundelas, the Jats and the Hill Rajas assisted the Mughals. Banda did not inherit any military organization which could face the Mughal army on equal—or nearly equal—terms. When he occupied Sirhind he had no artillery, no elephant, and not even a sufficient number of horses for all his men.

Despite his failure and tragic end Banda left a very important legacy for the Sikhs. 'A will was created in the ordinary masses to resist tyranny and live and die for a cause'. This will enabled the Sikhs to continue the War of Independence begun by him and to carry it to success after four decades of great suffering and sacrifice.

Liberation from Mughal rule

After the defeat and death of Banda the Sikh community faced a serious threat of extermination. Farrukh-siyar ordered that every Sikh falling into the hands of his officers should be put to death on refusal to embrace Islam. Large-scale executions followed. Many who had become Sikhs merely for the sake of carrying off booty as Banda's soldiers cut off their hair and returned to the Hindu fold. Those Sikhs who had not received the baptism of Guru Gobind Singh but really believed in Sikh doctrines (*Sahajdharis*) went about without long hair

to escape identification and persecution. Those baptized Sikhs who were sincere in their adherence to Guru Gobind Singh's teachings took shelter in hills and jungles.

When the Mughal policy of extermination lost its momentum as a result of Abdus Samad Khan's growing age and involvement in other troubles the Sikhs returned to the plains. They assembled at Amritsar, the centre of Sikh pilgrimage, in large numbers on the occasion of *Baisakhi* (in April) and *Diwali* (in October). As Guru Gobind Singh had separated the personal and scriptural aspects of Guruship, giving one to the *Khalsa* or the *Panth* and the other to the Holy *Granth*, the Sikhs devised a unique method of organizing their deliberations. They sat together with the Holy *Granth* (designated as *Guru Granth*) in their midst, discussed questions of common interest, and issued decisions in the form of resolutions called *Gurmatta*. These decisions were accepted by all Sikhs as decisions of the *Guru* and disobedience was looked upon as an act of sacrilege. Such meetings, called *Sarbat Khalsa*, were held twice a year, on the occasions of *Baisakhi* and *Diwali*.

In Muhammad Shah's reign it was decided to take firm steps against the Sikhs. Abdus Samad Khan was replaced in the *subahdari* of Lahore by his energetic son Zakariya Khan who had experience of fighting and suppressing the Sikhs. He held the governorship of Lahore from 1726 till his death in 1745. For several years he massacred and persecuted the Sikhs; they fled to the forests in search of security. In 1733 he adopted a policy of conciliation. The title of *Nawab*, with a large *jagir*, was conferred upon a Sikh leader, Kapur Singh of Faizullapur. But the Sikhs had tasted power and enjoyed booty; they were not prepared to live peacefully under Mughal rule. They organized themselves in two divisions: the *Budha Dal* ('Army of Elders'), consisting of the veterans under the leadership of *Nawab* Kapur Singh, and the *Taruna Dal* ('Army of the Young') consisting of younger fighters who, though restless, submitted to the general supervision of the universally respected *Nawab*. The depredations of the *Taruna Dal* alarmed the Mughal Government and the *jagir* was confiscated (1735). Then the *Budha Dal* renewed the offensive. The Mughal Government took possession of the temple of Amritsar, the Sikhs were prevented from assembling in their sacred shrine, and moving columns were sent round to haul up the Sikhs. The greatest martyr of this period was the *Granthi* of the Golden Temple,

Bhai Mani Singh, who had compiled the writings of Guru Gobind Singh (*Dasam Padshah ka Granth*). Many Sikhs left the plains and sought shelter in the Siwalik hills, the jungles of the Punjab, and the desert of Rajasthan.

While Nadir Shah was passing through the Siwalik hills region on his way back to Persia (1739) the Sikhs fell upon his rear and took much booty. The conqueror warned Zakariya Khan that these rebels would soon take possession of his country. Persecution was renewed by Zakariya Khan; it was continued after his death (1745) by his son and successor Yahya Khan. In 1746 he led a campaign in which about 7,000 Sikhs were killed and about 3,000 taken prisoner. This is known in the Sikh annals as the first *ghalughara* (holocaust).

Yahya Khan lost power in 1747; a year later the governorship of Lahore fell into the hands of Mir Mannu. The Sikhs took full advantage of the political confusion in the Punjab created by the struggle for the governorship of Lahore, dissensions among factious nobles in Delhi, and the invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali. They occupied Amritsar, and realizing the need of closer union among themselves elected Jassa Singh Ahluwalia as the supreme commander of the *Dal Khalsa* (1748). To serve as a base of military operations and to ensure the security of the central shrine they built a small mud fort, *Ram rauni* or *Ram garh*, named after the fourth Guru Ram Das, the founder of Amritsar, about a mile to the south of the Golden Temple. A territorial base for the Sikh political power was created by the occupation of different parts of the Central Punjab by different leaders.

Struggle against Abdali

In 1752 the Punjab ceased to be a part of the Mughal Empire as a result of Ahmad Shah Abdali's third invasion of India. Mir Mannu became governor of Lahore and Multan on behalf of the Afghan conqueror. Fresh hostilities commenced. The Sikhs sang: 'Mir Mannu is our sickle and we are his grass blades; the more he cuts us, the more do we grow in every house and hamlet'.

After Mir Mannu's death (1753) power was seized by his ambitious, unscrupulous and profligate wife Mughlani Begam. Quick political changes followed and the whole fabric of administration in the Punjab was broken up. Ahmad Shah Abdali, invading India for the fourth time (1756-57), placed the provinces of Lahore, Sirhind, Kashmir, Thatta and Multan

in charge of his minor son Timur as viceroy with the title of Shah. He plundered Amritsar; the sacred buildings and the tank were demolished. The Sikhs pounced upon his tents and looted his baggage without engaging in any pitched battle.

During the administration of Mir Mannu and Timur Shah an important role in Sikh affairs was played by the crafty *faujdar* of Jullundur, Adina Beg. Ostensibly opposed to the Sikhs, he was not prepared to crush them because that would reduce his own importance in the eyes of his Mughal and Afghan suzerains. Hoping to make himself master of the Punjab by driving out the Afghans with Maratha aid, he invited the Maratha chief Raghunath Rao, who was stationed near Delhi with a large army, and promised to pay him liberal financial subsidy. Raghunath Rao advanced to the Punjab and occupied Sirhind and Lahore (March-April 1758); Adina Beg and the Sikhs were his allies in this expedition. Immediately afterwards he left Lahore, leaving the government in charge of Adina Beg in return for an annual tribute of 75 *lakhs*. Adina Beg died within four months; the Marathas took charge of the Punjab early in 1759. By that time the Sikhs had established themselves in a commanding position in the Lahore area.

Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India for the fifth time (October 1759) in order to recover his lost hold on the Punjab. He defeated the Marathas in the third battle of Panipat (January 1761). He appointed one governor after another to hold charge of the Punjab, but the Sikhs made a bold bid for sovereignty. Lahore was occupied. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was proclaimed King with the title of *Sultan-ul-Qaum*. He coined money in the name of the *Guru* (1761). Practically the entire Punjab, from the Indus to the Sutlej, passed into the hands of the Sikhs, only a few pockets holding out in Abdali's name.

Ahmad Shah Abdali's sixth invasion followed. The Sikhs suffered a fearful carnage in a pitched battle which the invader forced upon them (February 1762). This is known as *wadda ghalughara* (second great holocaust). Amritsar was occupied; the sacred temple was blown up with gunpowder, and the tank was desecrated and then filled up with refuse and debris. Determined to avenge the insult to the sacred temple, the Sikhs attacked Amritsar and repulsed Abdali's forces.

After Abdali's departure for Afghanistan (December 1763) the Sikhs set out under different leaders to make conquests in different areas. Sirhind was occupied, plundered and deva-

stated (January 1764). The governor of Lahore submitted to the Sikhs (February 1764). Realizing that his agents would not be able to suppress the Sikhs Abdali invaded India for the seventh time (October 1764). Suffering from skirmishes with the Sikhs, ravaging and plundering the country, he placed Ala Singh of Patiala (who had become his feudatory some time ago) in charge of Sirhind, and left for Afghanistan (March 1765).

The Sikhs occupied Lahore, extended their territories in the Punjab, plundered Najibuddaula's territory and, entering into an alliance with the Jat chief Jawahir Singh, raided the territory of Madho Singh of Jaipur. Abdali came again—for the eighth time (1766-67)—and tried unsuccessfully to achieve decisive results in the apparently endless war against the Sikhs. He came again twice—as far as the Chenab in 1768, and to Peshawar in 1769; but he had to retreat owing to the recalcitrance of his own troops. He died in 1772. The Sikhs extended and consolidated their power. In the early seventies their political authority extended from Saharanpur (in Uttar Pradesh) in the east to Attock in the west, and from Multan in the south to Kangra and Jammu in the north.

Causes of Sikh success

The success of the Sikh War of Independence may be attributed to three principal factors. The first was the Sikh method of warfare. Too weak in organization, equipment and arms to face the large and well-equipped Mughal and Afghan armies, the Sikhs adopted hit-and-run tactics, making the fullest use of their knowledge of local geography and their unparalleled capacity for endurance. Against the repeated Afghan incursions they 'settled down, like a wall of concrete, a dam against the encroachments of the northern flood'. A Muslim historian warned his co-religionists: 'Do not call them dogs because they are lions, and show bravery like lions in the field. If you wish to learn the art of war come face to face with them in battle ... If their armies take to flight, do not think they are running away. It is only a war tactic of theirs'.

The second factor was moral ardour. The Sikhs were not lawless enemies of lawful authority; they were dedicated soldiers fighting for freedom. The first phase of the struggle was directed against the disintegrating, but cruel and oppressive, Mughal power. In the second phase the enemy was a foreign invader,

Ahmad Shah Abdali. Although the military weakness of the Sikhs sometimes compelled them to act as plunderers, their object was the attainment of freedom. What Ranade says about the Maratha War of Independence against Aurangzib is no less applicable to the Sikh War of Independence: 'Mere freebooters and plunderers never could have obtained success in such a war against such a foe'.

Thirdly, the Sikhs found in religious fervour an inexhaustible fountain of strength and a perennial stimulant to sacrifice. Ahmad Shah Abdali is reported to have said that for the complete reduction of the Sikh power it would be necessary to wait until their religious fervour evaporated. It was the spirit infused into the *Khalsa* by Guru Gobind Singh which enabled it to establish its *Raj*.

A very important feature of the Sikh War of Independence was that it was a people's war, not a war led by an individual who wanted to establish a kingdom for himself. The victory was not won by the genius of a single great leader; it was a well-earned reward for an unprecedented democratic upsurge of a whole community. The result was the foundation, not of a princely State, but of a Commonwealth.

CHAPTER 2

RISE OF THE MARATHA EMPIRE

1. SHAHU (1707-49)

Maharashtra in 1707

The Marathas faced the greatest crisis in their history in 1689 when their King, Shambhuji, was defeated, captured and tortured to death by Aurangzib, and his family, including his minor son and successor Shahu, fell into Mughal hands. Shahu remained in honourable captivity in the Mughal camp for about nineteen years and came back to his own country after escape following Aurangzib's death in 1707. The crown passed on to the younger branch of Shivaji's family. His second son, Rajaram, was the nominal ruler of the Marathas from 1689 to 1700. He showed no capacity for leadership either in war or in administration. Leaving his homeland he went to Karnatak, held his court at Jinji where Shivaji had established a regional centre of Maratha power, and took charge of Maratha activities on the east coast. In Maharashtra resistance to the Mughals was organized by Maratha generals and officers, usually on their own initiative and with such resources as they could collect by their own efforts. Animated by the desire to avenge their wrongs and to protect the legacy left by Shivaji, the Maratha bands spread over the Mughal territories, harassing Mughal armies, destroying their outposts, looting their equipment and treasure, and exacting levies from the people. The Mughals, organized and directed by Aurangzib himself, failed to deal effectively with such raiders. They could fight pitched battles, but the Marathas avoided such encounters. They captured Maratha forts; but these were usually recovered by the Marathas, and their exploit was followed by recapture by the Mughals. Aurangzib could obtain no decisive result; the Marathas could not be crushed, nor could any compromise be imposed upon them. 'There was no Maratha Government or State-army for Aurangzib to destroy'.

In 1698 the Mughals captured the great fortress of Jinji after a long siege, but they could not capture Rajaram who had already escaped. He reached Satara and planned raids in Khandesh and Berar; but he died prematurely at the age of thirty in 1700 before his plans could be carried out. His minor son by

his wife Tara Bai, named Shivaji III, was placed on the throne. An unsuccessful attempt was made to secure the crown for another minor son of Rajaram by his wife Rajas Bai, named Shambhuji II. Tara Bai's energy and ability made her the supreme director of Maratha affairs. Acting in the name of her minor son, she provided effective leadership in the war against the Mughals. The historian Khafi Khan praises her political wisdom, administrative capacity and popularity with the army.

In January 1706 Aurangzib retired to Ahmadnagar. He died in February 1707. By that time, as the eye-witness Bhimsen says, the Marathas had become 'completely dominant over the whole kingdom and closed the roads'. The Mughals were completely demoralized. According to the Italian traveller Manucci, 'King Aurangzib repents of having entangled himself in the war with the Marathas. In this war over a hundred thousand souls have died yearly, and of animals, horses, pack oxen, camels, over three hundred thousand. The great nobles are in distress; their families are begging'. The Marathas paid a very heavy price for their success in escaping submission to the Mughal yoke. As Manucci says, Aurangzib 'left behind him the fields of these provinces devoid of trees and bare of crops, their places being taken by the bones of men and beasts. Instead of verdure all is black and barren'. During the years 1702-4 plague and famine killed over two millions of souls.

The absence of a firm central authority during the long years of war brought to the surface forces of disunity which had a lasting impact on the political development of the Marathas. Able and patriotic Maratha chieftains like Santaji Ghorpade and Dhanaji Jadhav fought among themselves. Ramchandra Pant and Dhanaji Jadhav opposed Tara Bai. Some of the leading Maratha families deserted the Maratha cause and joined the Mughals.

The exigencies of war led to the revival of the old system of conferring lands on military commanders for their services which prevailed during the period of Muslim rule in Maharashtra. Shivaji had abolished that system and made provision for cash payment. In the days of Rajaram and Tara Bai cash was not available. Moreover, Aurangzib's offer of *jagirs* to the Maratha chiefs had to be counteracted by similar inducements. The Maratha generals and soldiers were, therefore, asked on behalf of the Maratha State to occupy lands with the assurance

that these would be recognized as their hereditary possessions when the Maratha *Raj* would be fully established. Thus arose *jagirs* and *saranjams* which represented a new feudal element during the period of the development of the Maratha Empire. These military fiefs fostered centrifugal tendencies and became the ulcers of the Maratha political system.

During the War of Independence the Marāthas raiding the Mughal territories reduced spoliation to a system. As Bhimsen says: 'When the Marathas invade a province, they take from every *pargana* as much money as they desire and make their horses eat the standing crops or tread them down ... The servants of the Maratha State support themselves by plundering on all sides and pay a small part of their booty to their King, getting no salary from him'. This system was not given up when the Marathas became the greatest imperial power in the country. By ruthless spoliation they alienated the Rajputs. The terror created by the *bargis* in Bengal in the mid-eighteenth century is still the subject-matter of a widely known folk song in Bengali society. In the early nineteenth century Tod, a sympathetic friend of the Rajputs, condemned the Marathas as predatory hordes.

Civil war (1707-14)

On Aurangzib's death his second surviving son Azam Shah proclaimed himself Emperor in the Deccan and started for North India to fight against his elder brother Shah Alam who was coming from Lahore to contest the throne. Shahu, a captive in the Mughal camp since 1689, accompanied Azam Shah. While on his way he escaped from Azam Shah's camp near Bhopal (May 1707). Probably the Mughals tacitly consented to his adventure hoping that his arrival in Maharashtra would weaken the Marathas by a domestic feud. However, he arrived at Ahmadnagar and found support from several powerful Maratha chiefs. But Tara Bai declared him as an impostor; when doubts about his identity were removed, she argued that the kingdom founded by Shivaji had been lost by Shambhuji, that the existing kingdom was the creation of her husband Rajaram, and that her son Shivaji III was its legitimate ruler. Such arguments made little impression on the Marathas, and the restoration of the senior branch of Shivaji's family to its rightful authority was the popular demand.

An open struggle between Tara Bai and Shahu followed, resulting in the latter's victory at Khed (October 1707) on the

north bank of the Bhima. Satara soon fell (January 1708), Tara Bai and Shivaji III having already withdrawn for security to the fort of Panhala, the great stronghold twelve miles from Kolhapur. A few days later Shahu's coronation ceremony was performed at Satara (January 1708) where he established his capital. Panhala fell (March 1708); Tara Bai took refuge at Malwan on the west coast. Afterwards she established her headquarters at Kolhapur.

Soon the tide turned in her favour. Shahu was weakened by the death of his powerful supporter Dhanaji Jadhav, the revolt of Dhanaji's son Chandrasen, and the defection of the Maratha admiral Kanhoji Angria. A general rising against him followed. During his long captivity in the Mughal camp he had no opportunity of acquiring military training or political experience. He was incapable of providing such leadership as the crisis called for. He was surrounded by waverers and opportunists who were prepared in those uncertain days to throw in their lot with the winning party. He was rescued from this dangerous situation by the army, financial resources and diplomacy of Balaji Vishwanath. Appointed *Peshwa* (prime minister) in November 1713, he conciliated Angria by diplomacy. On being confirmed in command of the fleet (which he had secured in 1698), in possession of his territory in the Konkan and in his title of *sarkhel*, he deserted Tara Bai and promised to support Shahu. Chandrasen Jadhav's conspiracy was foiled. A palace intrigue led to a 'bloodless revolution' at Kolhapur; Rajas Bai's son Shambhuji II was placed on the throne; Tara Bai and her son Shivaji III were put in confinement (1714). The imperious queen, who had held charge of the kingdom during the years 1700-1707, passed the remaining forty-seven years of her life behind prison walls.

Thus Shahu's most formidable opponent was got rid of; but the installation of Shambhuji II as *Chhatrapati* at Kolhapur became 'the source of perennial evil affecting the unity' of the Marathas. Though he was a weak rival, he 'now and then disturbed Shahu's peace by playing into the hands of Nizam-ul-Mulk' who became the master of the Mughal provinces in the Deccan.

2. BALAJI VISHWANATH (1713-20)

Early career

Balaji Vishwanath belonged to a Chitpavan Brahmin family,

surnamed Bhat, originally resident in the Konkan. His forefathers were hereditary *deshmukhs* or revenue-collectors of *mahal* Danda Rajapuri and Shriwardhan in the Konkan, below the Western Ghats, about fifty miles south of Bombay. The family left the Konkan and migrated to the *Desh* region owing to persecution by the Sidi rulers of Janjira.

Balaji found employment in the service of the Maratha State about the end of Shambhuji's reign. He worked as administrator and revenue-collector in the Poona and Aurangabad districts in Rajaram's reign. His official work brought him into contact with the political and military convulsions of the period of the War of Independence. He served under Dhanaji Jadhav and, after Shahu's return to Maharashtra, persuaded that veteran leader to join the legitimate claimant to the throne. In 1708 Shahu appointed him *senakarte* (organizer of army) for the purpose of collecting troops and helping him to establish peace and order in the country. In organizing a new administrative machinery the new King generally favoured the members of old families; but if they were not available he appointed new officers who had proved their loyalty and ability. Balaji belonged to this latter class. In 1711 he foiled the conspiracy of the powerful rebel, Chandrasen Jadhav. He defeated other rebels and demonstrated his capacity to bring order out of chaos. When the threat from Kanhoji Angria became formidable Shahu appointed him *Peshwa* (November 1713). As prime minister his first great success was conciliation of Angria. What part he played in the 'bloodless revolution' at Kolhapur which led to the overthrow of Tara Bai is not known.

Relations with Mughals

Shahu's long residence in Aurangzib's camp in boyhood and youth left a deep impression on his mind. 'To the day of his death he was incapable of shaking off the belief that he was still the vassal of the Mughal Empire for which, and for the memory of the great Emperor in whose household he was reared, he cherished the profoundest reverence'. Surprisingly, he forgot that Aurangzib had tortured his father to death, deprived him of his inheritance, and kept him as a prisoner from 1689 to 1707.

Bahadur Shah came to the Deccan in 1708 to fight against his rival brother Kam Bakhsh. He returned to North India after the latter's defeat and death. During this period Shahu established contact with him, hoping that imperial recognition

would strengthen him in his contest with Tara Bai. He expected *farmans* recognizing his hereditary title to the Maratha throne and granting rights of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*. Tara Bai sent counter-proposals on behalf of her son Shivaji III. 'Neither Shahu nor Tara Bai was fighting for the principle of complete independence as established by Shivaji'. Bahadur Shah decided that the two parties should settle the issue between themselves and imperial recognition would be granted to the party which succeeded in establishing unquestioned authority over the Maratha State. Shahu's confidence in Mughal goodwill yielded no dividend.

After Bahadur Shah's death (1712) Nizam-ul-Mulk held charge of the viceroyalty of the Mughal Deccan for about two years (1713-14). He was not prepared to acquiesce in Maratha encroachments upon the authority of the Mughal Empire in the Deccan. The Bhima-Godavari basin became the battleground of the forces of Shahu and Nizam-ul-Mulk. The latter, strengthened by the support of Chandrasen Jadhav who had finally deserted Shahu, opened negotiations with the Kolhapur party. Balaji commenced military operations against Nizam-ul-Mulk who soon found it necessary to withdraw his troops from Shahu's territory. A few months later he was recalled to Delhi.

Agreement of 1719

Nizam-ul-Mulk's policy of hostility towards the Marathas was continued by his successor in the viceroyalty of the Mughal Deccan, Sayyid Husain Ali, the younger of the two Sayyid brothers who held the Emperor Farrukh-siyar firmly in their grip. But the viceroy's forces were severely defeated by the Marathas under Khande Rao Dabhade who was collecting *chauth* from Khandesh and Gujarat on behalf of Shahu (1716). Encouraged by Husain Ali's discomfiture Farrukh-siyar, who had become anxious to get rid of the Sayyid brothers' imperious control, encouraged the Marathas to obstruct and destroy the viceroy. Troubled by Maratha attacks and by intrigues in the imperial court, Husain Ali opened negotiations with Shahu. Balaji acted on behalf of Shahu.

An agreement was made (February 1718), recognizing (1) Shahu's sovereign rights in *swarajya* (Shivaji's home territory in central Maharashtra) with all forts, (2) his rights of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* in the six Mughal *subahs* in the Deccan as also in Mysore, Trichinopoly and Tanjore, and (3) his annexation of the recent Maratha conquests in Berar and Gondwana

as also the old conquered districts in Karnatak. Shahu, on his side, was to pay ten *lakhs* of rupees as tribute in return for the *swarajya* and 10 per cent of the annual income from *sardeshmukhi*, to maintain a body of 15,000 horse in the Emperor's service in return for the *chauth*, and to protect the people from robbery and depredation in return for *sardeshmukhi*.

This agreement was provisional; it required Farrukh-siyar's confirmation. Determined to overthrow the Sayyid brothers, he protested against this 'base surrender' of his rights and territories. Invited by his elder brother Hasan Ali, Husain Ali marched to Delhi, accompanied by Balaji and a large Maratha army, and arrived at the capital in February 1719. Farrukh-siyar was overthrown and murdered. Muhammad Shah, his successor, was forced by the Sayyid brothers to ratify Husain Ali's agreement with the Marathas (1719). Balaji returned to Satara in July 1719 and died in April 1720.

The agreement was a triumph of Balaji's diplomacy, but historians differ in regard to its implications and importance. Its critics argue that it marked the submission of the Maratha State to Mughal suzerainty—a grievous lapse from the ideal of complete independence for which Shivaji and the leaders of the Maratha War of Independence had fought for several decades. Theoretically this is a weighty point; but Mughal suzerainty was no longer effective, and the Maratha State exercised in practice all sovereign rights, including those of war and peace. By accepting a legal fiction Balaji not only consolidated his master's authority in his own territory but opened the way of Maratha penetration into the Mughal *subahs* on the plea of realizing the *chauth* and the *sardeshmukhi*. About half a century later Clive, acting on behalf of the East India Company, secured a *farman* from Shah Alam—a nominal Emperor unable to take his seat in Delhi—for collection of revenue in Bengal on payment of 26 *lakhs* of rupees *per annum*. In 1718-19 the Mughal Empire was not as much of a shadow as it was in 1765, and the Marathas—as 'realists'—were 'rightly satisfied with the (actual) direction of policy leaving ostentatious display to the effete successor of Aurangzib'. The real historical importance of the agreement lies in the fact that it established on a legal basis the political supremacy of the Marathas in the Deccan.

Apart from the actual terms of the agreement, Balaji's visit to Delhi in connection with it produced important political and social results. While passing through Rajasthan, he noted the

weakness of the Rajput princes—their disunity, their ambivalence towards the Mughal Empire, their lack of political principles and consistent political aims. In Delhi he noted the weakness of the imperial regime: puppet Emperors, factious nobles, demoralized army, exhausted finances. This experience had some impact on Maratha policy in later years.

In the social sphere the splendour of Delhi and the grandeur of the imperial court provided a striking contrast with 'the poor and half-naked life of an average Maharashtrian in the south'. What the Marathas saw in Delhi 'widened their outlook and excited their greed for conquest and expansion'. It also brought a change in the upper-class Marathas' way of life. Balaji was 'more like a typical Brahmin than any of his successors'. His son Baji Rao—the 'fighting Peshwa' of Maratha tradition—'died as he lived in camp under canvas among his men'. Among his un-Brahminlike lapses were attachment to a Muslim mistress (Mastani) and excessive drinking. The narrow exclusive life of a Maharashtra Brahmin lost its rigidity under the stress and strain of the Mughal system of long marches and far-flung conquests.

Revenue system

Balaji has been credited with 'a mastery of finance'. Though constantly engaged in war and diplomacy, he took firm measures to put a stop to anarchy in the kingdom. He suppressed freebooters and restored civil government. Solid foundations were laid for a well-organized revenue system in the *swarajya* territory which was under direct royal administration. Here Balaji adopted the assessments made by the famous minister Malik Ambar in the Ahmadnagar Kingdom a century ago on the basis of Todar Mal's general principles. These assessments were fair and equitable in old days; but long years of war and devastation had affected the paying capacity of the people and a less exacting system was called for. Balaji knew it well, but he revived the old system because, it has been said, he wanted to 'always have a bill for arrears in hand'. Perhaps his policy was to keep the payers of revenue under control, and he found in bills for arrears an useful instrument. In general he was a friend—not an oppressor—of the peasantry. A Marathi document attributes to him: 'the most ardent desire ... to secure the weal and prosperity of the common masses'. The same document adds: 'He restored peace and plenty to the Maratha territory which had been utterly ruined by long special concessions'.

He appointed Brahmin revenue-collectors and agents who, it has been said, 'being of the same caste as the Peshwa himself, naturally played into his hands'. It is unlikely that he was guided by caste prejudice or any desire to use the revenue administration for personal purposes. It was customary to employ the Brahmins for administrative work which demanded education and knowledge of accounts.

Outside *swarajya* the collection of revenue, including *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*, was in charge of chieftains who had carved out areas of authority and influence in particular regions. For instance, Gujarat was earmarked for the *Senapati*, Berar and Gondwana for the Bhonsle of Nagpur, the Konkan for Kanhoji Angria, Karnatak for Fateh Singh Bhonsle, and Khandesh-Baglana and Central India for the Peshwa. They collected the revenue, administered the territory, maintained the local army, and contributed only a small share of their income to the royal exchequer. They were the primary rulers, and the King's control over them was nominal. Sometimes revenue officers (*darrackdars*) were sent to their domains from the Central Government, but there was no real curb on their power. Thus the Maratha territories were divided into virtually semi-independent principalities. Although the chieftains were expected not to encroach on one another's sphere or field of operation, their ambition and vanity often degenerated into selfish exclusiveness or dangerous rivalry.

From the political point of view this was an extremely unhealthy system, a dangerous incentive to centrifugal tendencies which weakened royal authority and affected the unity of the Maratha people. This was the beginning of the *jagir* system which Shivaji had abolished, and it led to feudalization which ultimately contributed largely to the dissolution of the Maratha Empire. But Balaji had little personal responsibility for this system. It was the product of the uncertain conditions prevailing during the War of Independence. Shahu and Balaji had to build upon the system that they found in existence and use the material they had before them. They could not dislodge the chieftains who were actually in control in different regions, nor could they substantially curtail their rights and privileges. They used the system for bringing peace to the distracted country; they provided opportunities for the warrior-chieftains to make new conquests and extend the sphere of Maratha influence. Balaji's conciliatory policy brought the enterprising and re-

sourceful Maratha chieftains under a common flag—the King's flag—and supplied the incentive for the speedy expansion of Maratha power.

The system of levying *chauth* (one-fourth of revenue) and *sardeshmukhi* (one-tenth of revenue), introduced by Shivaji and formally recognized by Muhammad Shah in 1719, served three purposes. It brought a large income and strengthened the financial basis of Maratha power. It created a community of interest among the King, the local chieftains and some principal officers of the State. The whole of the *sardeshmukhi* belonged to the King. Of the *chauth* 25 per cent belonged to the King, 66 per cent was distributed among the chieftains, and the remaining 9 per cent was given by the King to officers and others. Every increase in the amount of *chauth* benefited all Maratha political elements. Thus the *chauth* was an important integrating factor in the loosely organized Maratha State. Finally, the network of Maratha *chauth*-collectors was spread over the Mughal provinces, giving the Marathas many opportunities of spreading their influence. Under the Peshwas the system of *chauth* 'proved a convenient means for the rapid expansion of the Maratha power'.

Estimate

Sir Richard Temple says: 'Balaji carried victoriously all his diplomatic points and sank into premature death with the consciousness that a Hindu Empire had been created over the ruins of Muhammadan power and that of this Empire the hereditary chiefship had been secured for his family'. He was the founder of 'a Hindu Empire' in the sense that 'without his directing brain Shahu, enervated by his upbringing in the Mughal court, would not have survived for a year'. He preserved the legacy of Shivaji by 'bringing order out of chaos, upholding national interests and preserving the unity of the State when it looked as if it would once more be split up into a number of petty principalities' engaged in mutual strife. By securing the agreement of 1719 from the Mughal Empire he provided a firm basis for the expansion of the Maratha power. The trust he had inspired in his master's mind led to the selection of his son Baji Rao as his successor. For three generations the Bhat Peshwas managed the affairs of the Maratha State with such success that the feeble descendants of Shivaji faded into insignificance and under a dynasty of minister-rulers the Marathas became the dominant political power in India. From a retrospective point

of view Balaji's appointment as Peshwa in 1713 marks the end of the royal period in Maratha history.

3. BAJI RAO I (1720-40)

Appointment

Although Baji Rao succeeded his father as Peshwa at the early age of twenty he had some training in politics and war, and was well-versed in reading, writing and accounts. Unlike Balaji, who was a statesman rather than a soldier, he had been brought up on the saddle. 'A contemporary artist represented him in the dress of a common trooper, sitting with his reins on his horse's neck, while he rubbed between his hands ears of corn. On this dry grain he would subsist for days, and at night he would sleep on the ground like an ordinary soldier, his bridle over his arm, and his lance struck on the ground behind him. Such a man the Marathas would follow, as they followed Shivaji in the old days, to the gates of Hell if need be'. Shahu recognized his precocious ability; moreover, he desired to reward him for his father's services. This explains Baji Rao's appointment to the highest ministerial office against the advice of the King's counsellors.

Shahu, now thirty-eight years old, might have taken personal charge of the political, military and administrative affairs of the State and used the Peshwa as the chief instrument for the execution of his policy. But he was content to pass his time hunting, fishing and hawking, leaving the responsibilities of government to the minister as he had done in the days of Balaji Vishwanath. His reluctance to involve himself in the details of administration and diplomacy and to lead armies in the field accelerated the transfer of power from the crown to the chief minister. But Shahu was not a mere titular head of the State. Occasionally he imposed moderation on his minister, resented his 'overgrown power and expressed his displeasure in sharp reprimands'. Baji Rao, on his part, 'never forgot that his authority emanated from the crown and had its roots in the confidence placed in him by the Sovereign'. The outlook and methods of the King and the Peshwa differed in important respects, but there was never any lack of co-operation or mutual respect.

Relations with Nizam-ul-Mulk (1720-28)

The second viceroyalty of Nizam-ul-Mulk in the Mughal Deccan began in 1720 and continued with an interruption

(1722-24) till his death in 1748. In 1724-25 he became the virtually independent ruler of the Mughal Deccan. As a leader of the Turani party in the imperial court he did not approve of the agreement concluded by Sayyid Hasan Ali with the Marathas in 1718 and subsequently confirmed by the Emperor Muhammad Shah. He was determined to preserve for himself the Mughal possessions in the Deccan which were open to Maratha encroachments. He intrigued with Shahu's rival, Shambhuji II of Kolhapur. He patronised influential Maratha chieftains like Chandrasen Jadhav who were disloyal to Shahu. His plan to create for himself an independent principality, and his ability in war, diplomacy and administration, made him a formidable antagonist of the Maratha State.

For several years Shahu and Baji Rao followed a conciliatory policy towards the Nizam. They were his allies in the battle of Shakarkheda (1724) in which he defeated his rival Mubariz Khan. Having secured the undisputed mastery of the Mughal Deccan he opposed the Maratha expeditions to Karnatak (1725-27). He removed his capital from Aurangabad to Hyderabad and asked for exemption of the district of Hyderabad from *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*. He took up Shambhuji II's claim for recognition as head of the Maratha State and joined him in threatening an attack on Shahu's territory. The challenge was taken up. Baji Rao, leading a large army consisting mainly of light cavalry, invaded the Nizam's territory. After a skirmish near Jalna he avoided a general engagement, pushed northward towards Bunhanpur, and then advanced to Gujarat through northern Khandesh. After pursuing him for some time the Nizam marched towards Poona, occupied it and proceeded to Baramati. Meanwhile Baji Rao had turned back and marched towards Aurangabad. The Nizam hastened to defend Aurangabad, the heart of his dominions. Challenged by Baji Rao near Palkhed, starved of food and water, he came to terms without fighting. A treaty was concluded at Mungi-Paithan (March 1728). Shahu was recognized as *Chhatrapati*, his claim to *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* of the six Mughal *subahs* was admitted, and all places (including Poona) occupied by the Nizam were restored.

The Palkhed campaign was 'a masterpiece of strategic mobility'. Its political results were decisive. The Nizam's attempt to strike a deadly blow at Shahu's kingdom completely failed. The agreement of 1719, which was the basis of Maratha supre-

macy in the Deccan, was vindicated. The *swarajya* was freed from Mughal interference and encroachments. The young Peshwa earned the complete confidence of the King as also of the Maratha people.

Kolhapur

Shambhuji II, obstinate and self-seeking, continued his resistance to Shahu even after losing the Nizam's support after the treaty of 1728 at the end of the Palkhed campaign. He started hostilities, but submitted unconditionally after suffering a defeat (1730). Shahu granted him generous terms by the treaty of Warna (April 1731). The territory held by him was recognized as his State with the river Warna as its boundary; but its right to expand southward up to Rameshwaram was recognized. The Kolhapur State enjoyed complete autonomy, but it occupied a subordinate position in relation to the parent State of Satara. Shambhuji II had neither political sagacity nor military ability. He took no part in the expansion of Maratha power in the Karnatak region. He died in 1760.

North India: Hindu Empire?

The Nizam had become a permanent factor to be reckoned with in formulating the future policy of the Maratha State. His extensive dominions, and his claim to the Mughal legacy in Karnatak, restricted the possibilities of Maratha expansion in South India. But he might be prevented from extending his power to North India by pursuing the policy of pushing Maratha arms and political control to the Mughal *subahs* of Malwa and Gujarat which had been initiated in earlier times. In 1732 the Nizam concluded an agreement with Baji Rao under which the former would 'be at liberty to gratify his ambition in the South' while the latter 'obtained a free hand in the North'.

Baji Rao is said to have formulated and pursued the ideal of *Hindupad-padshahi* (Hindu imperialism). 'Now is our time', he reportedly told Shahu and his counsellors, 'to drive the strangers from the country of the Hindus, and acquire immortal renown. Let us strike at the trunk of the withering tree and the branches will fall off themselves. By directing our efforts to Hindustan, the Maratha flag shall fly from the Krishna to Attock'. Shahu is said to have exclaimed: 'You shall plant it beyond the Himalayas'.

The alleged bid for establishing a Hindu *Padshahi* on the ruins of the Mughal *Padshahi* appears to be no more than a myth. Instead of 'striking at the trunk of the withering tree'

the Marathas always aimed at keeping it standing so that they could utilise it for their own political purposes. Shahu always considered himself as a vassal of the Mughal Empire. The agreement of 1719 was considered as having legitimised the political and financial rights of the Maratha State. The clause in the treaty of Mungi-Paithan (1728), recognizing Shahu as the lawful *Chhatrapati*, indicates the importance attached by Baji Rao to such recognition by the Nizam who represented the Mughal Emperor in the Deccan. At the time of Nadir Shah's invasion Baji Rao 'was convinced that the days of the Chaghtai Empire were numbered and a great calamity had arisen for the Hindus'. If the rule of the Mughals was really supplanted by the rule of Nadir Shah, who had declared that Maratha aggression was the main cause of his coming to India, then—and then only—there would be a good opportunity to establish a Hindu Empire. Apparently Baji Rao desired confrontation with the Iranians, not the destruction of the Mughals.

'Shahu concluded treaties as a vassal of the Empire and, like other powerful vassals, attempted to influence Mughal politics. The Peshwas continued the policy and always spoke of defending, not replacing, the Mughal power'. In 1752 Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao concluded a treaty with the Emperor Ahmad Shah, undertaking to defend the empire against its external and internal enemies. During the last years of his Peshwaship the Marathas made persistent attempts to control politics at the imperial court. In 1772 the Marathas brought the puppet Emperor Shah Alam II to Delhi as their protegee. For many years he remained the protegee of Mahadji Sindhia and his successor, Daulat Rao Sindhia. From the protection of the Marathas he passed to the protection of the English on the capture of Delhi by the latter in 1803.

Gujarat

The Dabhade family had come into prominence in the days of Shivaji and Rajaran. Khande Rao Dabhade, appointed *Senapati* by Shahu in 1717, had accompanied Balaji Vishwanath to Delhi in 1719. Under the Maratha system the *Peshwa* and the *Senapati*, 'charged with the command of a great proportion of the Raja's personal troops, were ordered to direct their attention to the general protection and defence of the territory'. But there was a race for power, and in Shahu's reign the *Peshwa* far outstripped the *Senapati*.

After Khande Rao's death (1729) his son Trimbak Rao was

appointed *Senapati* by Shahu (1730). Already Khandesh, Balaghat and Malwa had been assigned to the *Peshwa* as his sphere of activity, and a similar assignment had been granted to the *Senapati* in respect of Baglana and Gujarat. Chimnaji Appa, Baji Rao's brother, concluded an agreement with Sarbuband Khan, the Mughal *subahdar* of Gujarat, which was a clear infringement of the *Senapati's* claims over that *subah* and an assertion of the *Peshwa's* superiority over the other chiefs of the Maratha State (1730). Trimbak Rao, determined to resist such encroachment, entered into secret negotiations with the Nizam to invoke his aid. Baji Rao entered Gujarat; Trimbak Rao was defeated and killed in a battle at Dabhoi (1731). Pilaji Gaikwar, who had been levying tribute in Gujarat since 1723, brought the province under Maratha control by 1737. He acted in the name of Trimbak Rao's weak successor.

The exit of the Dabhades from the political field left the *Peshwa* without a rival at home and 'with all but nominal control of the Maratha sovereignty'.

Malwa

In the first decade of the eighteenth century the advance of the Marathas to the Mughal territories adjoining the Deccan on the north was really not an expansionist movement; it was 'a counterpoise against Mughal attacks on their bases'. In the case of Malwa the first Maratha invasion took place in 1699. 'The path thus opened was never again closed till at last in the middle of the eighteenth century Malwa passed into the regular Maratha possession'. Several Maratha chieftains fought the Mughal *subahdars* with varying results till Baji Rao adopted the policy of northward expansion. His aim was twofold: to secure for the Maratha State a dominant position in the Mughal Empire, and to release for a high political purpose the energy of the Maratha people which was being wasted in internal disputes and fratricidal war.

Malwa was the connecting link between the Delhi-Agra region and the Deccan. Through it passed the highways of commerce and military routes which were of the highest importance from the imperial point of view. The provincial administration broke down during the last years of Aurangzib. The Rajput chiefs and *zamindars* refused co-operation with the Mughal Government and assisted the Maratha invaders by giving them information of military value. The basis of the Maratha aggression was a clause in Husain Ali's draft agree-

ment of 1718 which had been rejected by the imperial court. Ignoring this rejection, the Peshwa reserved for himself the claim to *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* in Khandesh and Malwa.

Baji Rao invaded Malwa twice in his early years—in 1723 and in 1724—and collected *chauth*. In 1725 Girdhar Bahadur was appointed *subahdar* of Malwa. Determined to protect the imperial interest in the province, he turned out Maratha officers and chased Maratha troops beyond the Narmada. A big army led by the Peshwa's brother Chimnaji Appa invaded Malwa. Girdhar Bahadur was defeated and killed in a battle at Amjhera near Mandu (1728). In 1729 Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur was appointed *subahdar* of Malwa. Realising the difficulty of resisting the Marathas, he adopted the policy of appeasement. The imperial court, suspicious of his motive, replaced him in the government of Malwa by an anti-Maratha *subahdar*, Muhammad Khan Bangash (1730). The latter's policy of resistance failed, and Sawai Jai Singh was reappointed *subahdar* of Malwa (1732). Pursuing his old policy of appeasement, he purchased peace by sharing with the Marathas the large sums sent to him from Delhi for the defence of the province. The imperial court was not yet prepared to give up Malwa, but imperial campaigns in 1734-36 failed to keep Malwa free from the aggression of the Marathas. In 1738 the Nizam, after his defeat at Bhopal, offered the Peshwa, by the treaty of Duraha Sarai, the whole of Malwa and the complete sovereignty of the territory between the Narmada and the Chambal. This arrangement was subject to confirmation by the Emperor which the Nizam failed to secure. The matter remained unsettled during the rest of Baji Rao's life. In 1741 Balaji Baji Rao advanced to Gwalior and a settlement was made with the Emperor through the mediation of Sawai Jai Singh who was then *subahdar* of Agra. Muhammad Shah bestowed the deputy governorship of Malwa on the Peshwa. This was a device for saving the Emperor's face; 'Malwa ceased to be a part of the empire of Delhi'.

In 1732 Baji Rao made a deed of assignment of Malwa defining the shares of Malhar Rao Holkar, Ranoji Sindhia and the Pawars. This deed laid the foundation of four Maratha States in Malwa: those of Holkar, Sindhia and the two Pawars.

Bundelkhand

The last decade of the life of the Bundela chief Chhatrasal passed in continuous conflict with the Mughal Government.

The leader of the imperial forces was Muhammad Khan Bangash, the *subahdar* of Agra. By 1728 all Bundela forts had passed into his hands, and the Bundela forces, defeated in the field, had been scattered. When Chimnaji was reducing Malwa after his victory at Amjhera, Baji Rao entered Bundelkhand at the head of a large army in response to Chhatrasal's appeal for aid. The Maratha forces, co-operating with the Bundelas, reduced Muhammad Khan Bangash to great straits and compelled him to retire from Bundelkhand (1729). Two years later Chhatrasal died (1731); two of his sons divided the State among themselves, and a small *jagir* was given to Baji Rao. The other chiefs of Bundelkhand, such as the rulers of Datia, Orchha and Narwar, resisted the Maratha demand for tribute. An imperial force led by the *wazir* entered Bundelkhand, but he was defeated by the Marathas (1735).

Rajasthan

The advance of the Marathas into Malwa and Bundelkhand brought them into contact with the Rajput princes and allured them to involvement in their mutual strife. The disintegration of the Mughal Empire deprived the Rajput States of the protection which they had received since the days of Akbar from imperial suzerainty. 'No superior power was left to enforce lawful rights and prevent ambitious conflicts between one vassal State and another, and between one prince and another of the same royal house. All the pent-up personal ambitions and inter-State rivalries (hitherto checked) now burst forth without a fear or check. Rajputana became a zoological garden with the barriers of the cages thrown open and the keepers removed'. The expansionist Marathas took full advantage of this situation.

The first important occasion for Maratha intervention in Rajasthan was provided by a succession dispute in Bundi which was provoked by the ambition of Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur to reduce it to vassalage. Invited by one of the claimants to the throne of Bundi, Malhar Rao Holkar and Ranoji Sindhia invaded Bundi and captured the fort (1734), but their work was undone by a Jaipur force soon after their departure. This incident opened the eyes of the Rajputs to the Maratha peril. Sawai Jai Singh called a conference of all the princes of Rajasthan to concert measures for keeping the Marathas out of their country. But the moral decay of the Rajputs and the difficulty of co-operating with the imperial troops made a vigo-

rous and united policy of defence against the Marathas impossible.

In 1736 Baji Rao appeared in Mewar. The terrified Rana, Jagat Singh, promised an annual tribute. This was the beginning of the Maratha system of levying tribute on the Rajput States. The Peshwa then advanced north towards Jaipur, met Sawai Jai Singh and returned to the Deccan.

North Indian expeditions (1737-38)

Baji Rao's North Indian expeditions of 1737-38 have been described as 'the most famous of his many famous achievements'. Unable to secure full control over Malwa through a settlement with the Mughal Government, he started from Poona towards the end of 1736 to carry the war to the gates of Delhi. After reducing Bhopal and Bhilsa, which were held by Rohilla chieftains, he attacked the Jat Raja of Bhadwar and realised tribute from him. The approach of a large Maratha army under the Peshwa within a distance of 70 miles from Agra created consternation at the imperial court and elaborate preparations were made to ensure the defence of the Delhi-Agra region. Malhar Rao Holkar raided the lower Doab, but he was repulsed with losses at Jalesar by the *subahdar* of Oudh, Sa'adat Khan. Undaunted by this reverse, the Peshwa made a wide detour through the Jat and Mewat country and reached the environs of Delhi (March 1737). He began negotiations instead of sacking the capital because he did not want a definite breach with the Emperor. A sudden attack on the Maratha force outside the city was repulsed. Hearing that large Mughal forces were approaching, Baji Rao 'disappeared as suddenly as he had appeared before the capital'. His plan was to draw them into the arid hills of the Mewat country, but the imperial generals refused to swallow the bait. Baji Rao retreated unopposed through Rajasthan and reached Poona (July 1737). The cavalry dash to Delhi was a remarkable military feat; but it served no direct political or military purpose apart from creating a permanent impression in North India about the strength and resourcefulness of the Marathas.

Although the Nizam had agreed in 1732 to give the Peshwa a free hand in North India he was alarmed at his appearance in Delhi. The weakness of the empire had been revealed; its political and military bulwarks were crumbling on all sides. The Nizam's own position was linked directly with the continuance of the empire. He 'decided to make common cause with

the imperial Government to save it and save himself thereby'. He was encouraged by an invitation from the imperial court for support and aid against the Marathas.

The Nizam started for Delhi before the Peshwa's return to the Deccan. On arrival at the capital (June 1737) he received favours from Muhammad Shah and was entrusted with the command of a large army for a campaign against the Marathas. Marching southward through Bundelkhand, receiving reinforcements on the way from Oudh as also some Rajput and Bundela chiefs, he arrived at Bhopal (December 1737). Meanwhile Baji Rao had left for North India at the head of a large army (October 1737). The two armies established contact near Bhopal. The Marathas cut off the Nizam's supplies; they also foiled his attempt to break through the cordon under cover of his artillery. Baji Rao's masterly tactics and strategic manoeuvres completely isolated him in the town of Bhopal. He sued for peace and signed a convention at Duraha Sarai near Bhopal (January 1738). The Peshwa was promised the *subahdari* of Malwa, the right to levy tribute on the princes in the region between the Narmada and the Chambal, and an indemnity of 50 lakhs. The Nizam promised to secure imperial confirmation of these terms.

'The victory of Bhopal marks the zenith of the Peshwa's triumphant career'. Although the Emperor declined to confirm the terms of the convention, the defeat of a large imperial army led by the greatest of the Mughal nobles and the Nizam's acceptance of the Maratha ascendancy in Malwa were substantial achievements.

The west coast

Balaji Vishwanath's agreement with Kanhoji Angria (1714) had recognized the admiral's dominant position on the west coast. He had made an agreement with the English merchants (1713) settling mutual relations and rights as regards movements of ships and goods. By an agreement with the Sidis of Janjira (1715) he provided for peace and non-aggression. The Portuguese, however, did not come to any understanding with him.

Kanhoji controlled the coastal area from Khandesh to Vengurla. He had good ships. Kolaba and Vijaydurg were his fortified posts. He insisted on foreigners taking his permits while sailing on the seas near the Maratha coast. On this point there were disputes between him and the English. After three

unsuccessful attacks on Vijaydurg the English entered into an alliance with the Portuguese, and there was an unsuccessful joint attack on Kolaba (1721). On this occasion Shahu sent military aid to Kanhoji Angria. The Portuguese made a separate treaty with Baji Rao (1722); the English were defeated by Kanhoji Angria.

The admiral died in 1729. After the death of his son and successor Sekhoji, his two other sons, Shambhuji and Manaji, quarrelled about the inheritance. Baji Rao divided Kanhoji's possessions among them (1735) and thereby weakened the power of the Angrias.

The Sidis of Janjira—a fortified island about half a mile distant from the mainland—had always troubled the Marathas. Even after the consolidation of Shahu's power they held a part of the *swarajya* territory including the Kolaba district and important places such as Raigarh (Shvaji's old capital), Underi, Chaul, Dabhol and Anjanwel.

Hostilities with the Sidi of Anjanwel, who offended an influential religious teacher named Brahmendra Swami, started about 1726. Baji Rao concluded a treaty in 1733; the Sidi of Janjira lost his possessions on the mainland. But the Sidis soon started an offensive, and hostilities were renewed. Peace was made again in 1736. The Sidis retained possession of Anjanwel and Gowalkot, but their sea-power was crippled and they virtually became a tributary of the Maratha State.

Bassein

The Portuguese occupation of the island of Salsette (Sasati, 66 villages) and the fortified post of Bassein, which was the capital of their 'Province of the North', was a threat to Maratha security, naval power and religious freedom. Their rule was despotic, corrupt and intolerant. Forced conversion was an important feature of their policy. They dominated the coastal waters, interfered in the coastal trade, and often joined the enemies of the Marathas like the Sidis and the English.

In the eighteenth century the Portuguese power was on the decline. Having lost the command of the sea to the Dutch and the English, they clung to their posts on the west coast with tenacity. After the occupation of Kalyan and Bhiwandi by the Marathas (1719) they strengthened the defences of Salsette and Bassein. They supported Sambhuji Angria who defied the Peshwa. There was a general demand among the Marathas for liberation from foreign rule and religious tyranny.

In 1737 a strong force under Chimnaji Appa was sent to strike at the Portuguese possessions. The narrow coastal strip, cut up in many places by inland channels of the sea and the rivers flowing into it, was unsuitable for large-scale movement of the cavalry. The Portuguese defenders received help from Goa, their principal settlement, as also from Portugal, the Sidis and the English. The struggle continued for two years. Salsette and Bassein fell in 1739. By a treaty concluded in 1740 the Portuguese ceded their entire 'Province of the North' with the exception of the port of Daman and a few villages. The Marathas acquired Salsette, Bassein, a few towns and twenty fortresses. 'The Portuguese power, which had flourished and overawed the coastal regions in the sphere of commerce and religion for two centuries, came to be circumscribed to Goa, Daman and Diu'.

Regional dynasties

The twenty-year Peshwaship of Baji Rao saw the beginnings of the regional dynasties which played an important role in the days of his successors. There were two exceptions: Kolhapur and Nagpur. Kolhapur, ruled by the junior branch of Shivaji's family, was stabilised by the treaty of Warna (1731). The Bhonsle Rajas of Nagpur claimed close kinship with the *Chhatrapatis* of Satara and Kolhapur. Parsoji Bhonsle received the title of *Sena Saheb Subah* in 1699 and was entrusted with the collection of *chauth* in Berar and Gondwana. His title was confirmed, and a *sanad* granting him six *sarkars* and several *mahals* in Berar issued, by Shahu. His son and successor, Kanhoji Bhonsle, opposed Shahu and was imprisoned by him. His nephew, Raghuji Bhonsle, succeeded to the title and territorial assignments of the family. His early activities covered Berar and Gondwana. For his later exploits he chose Karnatak and Bengal.

Ranoji Sindhia was the founder of the Sindhia dynasty which left its impress on Maratha history. Connected by birth with a Patel family, he started his career as a menial servant of Balaji Vishwanath and rose to be a captain of cavalry under Baji Rao. In 1731 he was associated with Malhar Rao Holkar in the collection of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* of Malwa. After this Malwa became the field of his activities, and he established his headquarters at Ujjain. He took part in Baji Rao's North Indian expeditions in 1737-38 as also in Chimnaji Appa's invasion of the Portuguese territories. He died in 1745. His

four surviving sons—Jayappa, Dattaji, Mahadji, Tukoji—distinguished themselves in many fields.

The Holkars belonged to the shepherd caste. Malhar Rao Holkar, the son of a cultivator, entered Baji Rao's service in 1721. He took a leading part in the battle of Amjhera (1728). In 1730 he was put in charge of the collection of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* in Malwa; next year Ranoji Sindhia and the Pawars were associated with him. During the next decade he took part in important military operations. In 1741 an imperial *farman* was issued appointing the Peshwa as *subahdar* of Malwa, and Holkar and Sindhia were named in the deed as guarantors for his loyalty.

While Sindhia, Holkar and the Pawars converted their revenue assignments in Central India into independent principalities, the Gaikwars installed themselves in Gujarat. They were a hereditary family of Patels. They were associated with the *Senapati* from the beginning in the Maratha conquest of Gujarat. During the last years of *Senapati* Khande Rao Dabhade his son Trimbak Rao and Pilaji Gaikwar managed his affairs. After Trimbak Rao's defeat and death at Dabhoi (1731) the *Senapati* family exercised little influence in Gujarat; matters remained in the hands of Pilaji and his son and successor, Damaji. The latter occupied Baroda in 1734. Next year he secured the right to the *chauth* of the northern half of Gujarat. Within a few years he became master of considerable territory in Gujarat although his nominal chief, Yashwant Rao Dabhade, was recognized as *Senapati*.

Achievements of Baji Rao

'If Shivaji was the founder of the Maratha State, Baji Rao could claim that he transformed what was a national State into an empire'. The 'national State' over which Shahu ruled at the time of Balaji Vishwanath's death was threatened by Shambhuji of Kolhapur and the Nizam who claimed the Mughal inheritance in the Deccan. Baji Rao removed the threat from Kolhapur and considerably weakened the Nizam by his victories at Palkhed and Bhopal. By crushing the power of the *Senapati* and keeping the Angrias in check he removed two recalcitrant elements which were opposed to the consolidation of royal authority. He removed the Portuguese menace by the conquest of Salsette and Bassein. The 'national State' was extended by the virtual annexation of Malwa and the consolidation of the Maratha power in Bundelkhand and Gujarat. But this 'empire'

was not a *Hindu* empire in the sense in which Aurangzib made the Mughal Empire an Islamic State, nor did it aim at the overthrow of the Mughal Empire. In 1737 Baji Rao did not sack the imperial capital, and in 1738 he did not move towards Delhi after the defeat of the imperialists under the Nizam at Bhopal.

Baji Rao was a matchless cavalry leader. 'He understood to perfection the peculiar tactics of the Maratha horse, and his campaigns against the Nizam were masterpieces of strategy'. Despite his weakness in artillery he was 'able within twenty years to extend the Maratha dominion in all directions and to overcome great antagonists both at home and abroad'. His policy of northward expansion before the Nizam's rule in the Deccan was crushed is open to criticism. But Baji Rao was handicapped in this respect because the Nizam's dominions had been assigned by Shahu to the *Pratinidhi*, the *Sarlashkar* and Fatesingh Bhonsle as their sphere of activity and they were incapable of challenging the Nizam.

Baji Rao founded the Maratha Empire through his conquests, but he did not consolidate it through administrative organization. 'The very idea of remodelling the political institutions of the Marathas and setting up schools for training, the new types of captains and civil servants required by the altered conditions of the Marathas State never entered Baji Rao's head'. Instead of trying to check the progress of feudalization which had begun during the War of Independence he actually promoted it by conferring large powers on chiefs like Sindhia and Holkar. Although handicapped by the chronic want of money for the heavy expenditure on his large armies, he made no arrangement for the efficient management of the finances of the State.

Baji Rao, it must be remembered, had no free hand. Traditional confidence in the cavalry prevented him from developing a powerful artillery. Traditional confidence in armies organized and led by feudal chiefs stood in the way of creating an efficient standing army directly controlled by the Central Government. Tradition was a very powerful factor in the conservative Maratha society. It was strengthened by the 'intense conservatism' of Shahu whose motto was: 'Do not break the old, or introduce the new'. His opposition to the destruction of the Mughal Empire and the Nizam—even of the Portuguese and the Sidis—imposed limits on Baji Rao's external policy. His

policy of confirming incapable assignees and other useless officers in their holdings weakened the basis of internal administration, and the Peshwa was unable to prevent it. In spite of these difficulties Baji Rao—a great man of action—gave the young Maratha State stability and secured its freedom and opened before it a wide prospect of expansion'.

4. BALAJI BAJI RAO (1740-61)

Changes at the top

Baji Rao was succeeded as Peshwa by his son Balaji who had not yet completed his nineteenth year. The office of the Peshwa had not yet become formally hereditary, and a rival claimant was put forward by Raghuji Bhonsle of Berar, a kinsman of Shahu and an inveterate enemy of Balaji Vishwanath's family. But Shahu preferred Baji Rao's son, and apprehending that the old and experienced officers of the State would trifle with the authority of the young minister, he made them take an oath that they would forgive Balaji's omissions and commissions and co-operate with him in the government. He also issued directions to the young Peshwa, asking him to take up his father's unfinished work, conquer the whole of Hindustan and lead his troops beyond Attock.

An agreement was made with Shambhuji II of Kolhapur to recognize him as successor to the throne after the death of Shahu who was childless. The immediate purpose was to frustrate Raghuji Bhonsle's plan of having his son adopted by Shahu and thereby recognized as heir-apparent. An important political result of the choice of Shambhuji as successor would have been the merger of the two Maratha States—Satara and Kolhapur—into a single unit. But this arrangement did not materialize. Because Shambhuji II had no issue, Shahu nominated as his successor at Satara Tara Bai's grandson, Ram Raja, the posthumous son of Shivaji III. After Shahu's death (1749), Ram Raja ascended the throne. After tortuous political intrigues and military operations, in which Tara Bai was Balaji's chief antagonist, Ram Raja became a prisoner in the fort of Satara (1750). Tara Bai declared that he was an impostor, not her grand on. He continued to live as *roi faineant* in the fortress of Satara till his death in 1777. His only function was to send robes of investment to every new Peshwa. He was succeeded in the nominal kingship by his adopted son Shahu II (1777-1810). The latter's sons, Pratap Singh and Shahuji, occu-

pied the throne till the annexation of the State by the British in 1849.

Peshwa's supremacy in State affairs

Although Shahu took little interest in the details of administration he was not the mere titular head of the Maratha Government. 'He directed all the operations, ordered and recalled commanders, and exercised a great controlling power on the chiefs, though he led no armies in the field'. Even the most powerful chiefs respected his authority, and the Peshwas' general policy was regulated by his wishes.

Before his death Shahu issued two decrees. By the first he assigned to Balaji supreme authority in military affairs and civil government: 'You should collect troops ... Whoever becomes the *Chhatrapati*, he will not interfere with your management'. The second decree stated: 'Whoever comes as *Chhatrapati* will continue you in the office of minister'. This was construed to mean that the Peshwaship would henceforth be hereditary in Balaji's family. The effect of the royal decrees was the transfer of supremacy in State affairs to the Peshwa. They became 'the veritable Magna Carta of the Peshwas'.

This 'constitutional revolution' was furthered by the Sangola Agreement concluded by Balaji with Ram Raja in 1750. Of the eight ministers of Shivaji's time only three—the *Pratinidhi*, the *Sachiv*, the *Senapati*—had retained some power during the period of the Peshwas' ascendancy. All of them were now rendered practically powerless. Moreover, the Peshwa became the greatest gainer in the distribution of territorial assignments; he received half of Gujarat as also Karnatak.

After the imprisonment of Ram Raja the Peshwa became the *de facto* ruler of the Maratha Empire; but Balaji and his successors professed to the last to act as the viceroy of the nominal Kings. Satara sank into political insignificance; Poona, where the Peshwas held their court, became the capital of the Marathas. 'The usurpation of the Peshwas neither attracted observation nor excited surprise. Indeed, the transition was 'easy, natural and progressive'. But the removal of the Monarchy as an active political force aggravated the centrifugal trends in the Maratha State. The house of Bhats did not command the prestige with which history had invested the house of Shivaji. Moreover, the ascendancy of the Brahmin Peshwas provoked the jealousy of the non-Brahmin chieftains—the Bhonsles, the Sindhias, the Holkars and the Gaikwars, for instance.

Balaji's difficulties

The death of Chimnaji Appa, a gifted general and a wise counsellor, within a few months of Balaji's succession to the Peshwaship was a great blow to him as also to the Maratha State. The new Peshwa was, on the whole, a poor substitute for Baji Rao; he did not inherit his father's gifts of military leadership, political management and generosity towards opponents. Moreover, he had to function against serious difficulties.

Shahu had a decisive voice in respect of general policy till his death (1749). He desired the expansion of Maratha power in North India; but this was to be accomplished in alliance with or as an agent of the Mughal Empire. Instead of overthrowing the tottering Mughal Empire he wanted the Peshwa to remain satisfied with governorships of the imperial provinces or with annual tributes in the form of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*. By the time of Shahu's death this policy had taken firm roots in the political and military systems of the Marathas. Balaji was unable to evolve a new policy even when there was no monarchical restraint. As a result Maratha wars had no finality, and conquest did not lead to consolidation.

Incessant wars created an acute financial problem. Baji Rao left the State almost on the verge of bankruptcy. The situation required Balaji to pay some attention to financial affairs even when he was involved in grave political and military problems. Warned by his father's embarrassing debts, he sought steadily to increase the resources of the State and to utilise them to the highest advantage. His careful supervision over financial transactions was supplemented by the improvement of administration in the territory around Satara which was the best protected and most productive. Efficient officers were placed in charge of districts, revenue-collectors were forced to produce their accounts, and the administration of justice was reformed.

Such improvements could not be introduced in the conquered territories outside the *swarajya*. Those regions were the personal domains of the Maratha chieftains whose links with Poona were political and military—not administrative. The difficulties inherent in the feudal organization of the Maratha State ruled out centralized administration. The *mulukgiri* raids by the Marathas destroyed agriculture and industry in the countries overrun, killing the goose which laid the golden eggs.

The loose imperial system of the Marathas was further weakened by the mutual quarrels of the chieftains who often took opposite sides in political disputes—in Rajasthan, for instance—and fought against one another for personal gains and prestige.

The image of the Marathas in North India was tarnished by the predatory character of their invasions. They did nothing to conciliate the people by constructing wells, canals, roads and other public works. They did not build temples to rally Hindu sentiment in favour of their political projects. When Ahmad Shah ravaged Mathura (1757) 'not a single Maratha bled in defence of the holiest of Hindu shrines; their pan-Indian suzerainty (*Hindupad-padshahi*) did not involve the duty to protect'. The Rajputs and the Jats remained aloof when Abdali marched to Panipat because Balaji's imperial policy was based on impolitic alienation of the two great martial races of North India. He lacked the political wisdom to realize that the policy followed against the Mughals during the War of Independence could not be the basis of imperial expansion.

Balaji inherited the moral laxity which had damaged the health and reputation of his father. Shahu, who had come out of the Mughal camp too late to escape its demoralizing impact on personal character, maintained a large *harem* full of maids and female servants with eunuchs to guard them. 'The Maratha nobles and their wives went about arrayed in silk and cloth of gold'. Luxury is seldom unaccompanied by vices. The austerity of Shivaji's age was a thing of the past. 'The Marathas were now a very different people from the early hillmen who had fought and conquered under the great Shivaji'. Balaji's political activities and military operations were necessarily influenced by changes in the Maratha society.

During Balaji's regime tremendous political changes occurred in different parts of India. The Mughal Empire lost whatever prestige it had till 1738 as a result of the invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali. The Punjab, cut off from the Mughal Empire, became a part of a Central Asian Afghan Empire, but its bastions were seriously threatened by the Sikhs. The Anglo-French Wars altered the political structure in South India. The advent of the British power in Bengal, which was soon to project itself into Oudh and also to bring the nominal Mughal Emperor under its protection, was a disastrous blow at the Mughal imperial system. The sudden impact of European arms and diplomacy changed the old

Indian world. The significance of these far-reaching developments was not grasped by Balaji.

Expeditions to North India (1740-48)

During the first eight years of his Peshwaship Balaji organized four expeditions to North India and personally took part in each of them.

The first expedition (1740-41) forged an understanding between the Peshwa and Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur. Its principal result was the recognition of the Peshwa, through an imperial *farman*, as the *subahdar* of Malwa. This meant the virtual cession of this Mughal *subah* to the Marathas.

In the second expedition (1741-43) the Peshwa's objective was to establish a firm hold on Bundelkhand which was necessary for the purpose of strengthening the Maratha influence on the Doab. A subsidiary purpose was to keep a watchful eye on the activities of Raghuji Bhonsle who had opposed his appointment as Peshwa. After establishing his authority in Bundelkhand he camped at Orchha during the rainy season of 1742. Raghuji Bhonsle claimed the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa—then under the rule of Alivardi Khan—as lying within his sphere of influence. Unable to resist Raghuji's invading forces single-handed, Alivardi appealed for assistance to the Emperor who directed the *subahdar* of Oudh, Safdar Jang, to help the Nawab of Bengal. But Safdar Jang had his own eyes on Alivardi's territory in Bihar. The Emperor then granted the *chauth* of these provinces to Shahu on the condition of their being protected from any interference. Safdar Jang withdrew. Alivardi entered into an agreement with the Peshwa who, seizing this opportunity of curbing Raghuji's power, entered Bihar (1743). On being defeated by the Peshwa's forces Raghuji withdrew from Alivardi's territories. Subsequently Shahu divided the spheres of influence between the Peshwa and Raghuji; Bengal, Orissa, parts of Oudh, and Bihar were assigned to Raghuji. Henceforth Balaji refrained from interference in this region; Raghuji continued his invasions of Alivardi's territories and succeeded in annexing Orissa to his own principality of Berar (1751).

During the third expedition (1744-45) Balaji tried to settle affairs relating to payment of *chauth* by the chiefs of Bundelkhand. Bhilsa was occupied from the Nawab of Bhopal.

During the fourth expedition (1747-48) Balaji intervened in the succession dispute in Jaipur.

These four expeditions were futile exercises in war and diplomacy. No decisive result was achieved in respect of the establishment of Maratha paramountcy anywhere in North India. Military operations had to be continued for realization of *chauth*. The Rajput princes became hostile. The political developments in Jaipur (1748-51) after the Peshwa's departure illustrate the short-sightedness of Maratha policy. After Sawai Jai Singh's death (1743) his son Ishwari Singh ascended the throne in the face of opposition from his younger brother Madho Singh. For several years Ranoji Sindhia and Malhar Rao Holkar supported Madho Rao in return for large subsidies. In 1747 Ishwari Singh routed his rival brother at the battle of Rajmahal. Balaji, during his expedition of 1747-48, instead of trying to settle the issue, put pressure on Ishwari Singh to make large concessions to Madho Singh. He was forced to yield in 1748 when Holkar marched against him. Two years later (1750) the Marathas returned to Jaipur to realize the promised tribute. Unable to meet the Maratha demands because the Jaipur territory had been ravaged by war and the treasury was empty, Ishwari Singh committed suicide. Madho Singh occupied the throne and, instead of fulfilling the financial commitments to the Marathas, turned against them. The infuriated Rajputs massacred the Marathas at Jaipur city (1751). Madho Singh became permanently hostile to the Marathas and tried to organize an anti-Maratha coalition after their disaster at Panipat in 1761.

Karnatak

Nizam-ul-Mulk was supported by the Peshwa in his fight against his own son Nasir Jang who tried to usurp the *subahdars*hip of the Mughal Deccan. But he did not give up his old plan of weakening the Marathas. He marched to Karnatak which he claimed as a part of the Mughal Empire, subjugated the local Nawabs, and occupied Trichinopoly from the Maratha chief Murar Rao Ghorpade (1743). He did not fight against the Marathas in any theatre of war during the remaining years of his life. He died in 1748.

Quarrels among the Nawabs in Karnatak and their aggressions against the local Hindu rulers served as an excuse for a Maratha expedition (1740) led by Raghuji Bhonsle under orders from Shahu. He defeated and killed the Nawab of Karnatak, Dost Ali, at the battle of Damalcheri (1740). Trichinopoly was taken, and Chanda Sahib, Dost Ali's son-in-law, was captured

and imprisoned (1741). This work was undone by Nizam-ul-Mulk in 1743. A Maratha expedition, led by Babuji Naik and Fatchsingh Bhonsle under Shahu's orders, suffered defeat in 1745. The Peshwa sent an expedition (1746-47) under his nephew, Sadashiv Rao Bhau, son of Chimnaji Appa, which was successful. Several *parganas* were wrested from the Nawab of Savanur, contributions were levied from the country between the Krishna and the Tungabhadra, and Nasir Jang was defeated in a pitched battle at Mayanhalli. These gains represented the traditional pattern of Maratha policy, but the Marathas made little contact with the European powers—the English and the French—who had already become determining factors in Karnatak affairs.

The second phase of the Karnatak campaigns began in 1753 when the Peshwa went to Seringapatam. There the forces of the Nizam (Salabat Jang) and the Maratha armies met; but the Nizam's French ally Bussy persuaded Balaji to spare Mysore. On his way to Poona the Peshwa captured Dharwar (1753). Next year he led another expedition and occupied several places including Bagalkot and Harihar.

Murar Rao Ghorpade, who claimed the right to collect *chauth* in the southern region on the basis of an alleged grant of Shambhuji of Kolhapur, defied the Peshwa and formed a league with the Afghan Nawabs of Karnool, Cudappah and Savanur. In 1756 Balaji led an expedition against these confederates. The Nawab of Savanur submitted, paid an indemnity and ceded a part of his territory. Then the Peshwa proceeded beyond the Tungabhadra and realized tribute from places like Bidnur, Raidurg, Sondha and Basavpattan. 'The southern frontier of the Maratha State now extended from the Krishna to the Tungabhadra'. Next year (1757) Murar Rao formed an alliance with the Peshwa.

Balaji's last Karnatak expeditions (1757-60) were directed against Mysore. In 1757 he personally marched to Seringapatam and compelled Nanjraj, the minister who ruled the Mysore State in the name of the puppet Raja, to pay an indemnity and to surrender several districts. On his way back the Peshwa took Sira, 'the gate of Karnatak'. His officers, who were left behind, made fresh conquests; one-half of the territories of the Nawabs of Savanur and Cudappah were occupied. In 1758 the main Maratha army turned its back on Mysore, and the Marathas were expelled from the districts occupied by

them. A fresh Maratha army was sent in 1759, but Haidar Ali's military operations compelled it to give up the claim to the disputed districts for a large sum of money. In 1760 another Maratha army proceeded to Mysore, defeated Haidar Ali and recovered much of the lost ground. But the Marathas were at that time facing a serious threat in North India from Ahmad Shah Abdali, and military operations in South India had to be held in abeyance.

Hyderabad

Nizam-ul-Mulk's death (1748) was followed by a war of succession in the Hyderabad State. With this war was linked another war of succession to the Nawabship of Arcot. The twin wars opened the door for the intervention of the two rival European powers—the English and the French—in South Indian political struggles. The involvement of the Marathas was a necessary consequence.

After the death of two initial claimants to Hyderabad—Nasir Jang and Muzaffar Jang—in 1750-51 Salabat Jang was installed as the Nizam by the French. He made a 'friendly arrangement' with the Peshwa (1751), but it was soon broken and hostilities followed. In 1752 the Peshwa extended his support to Ghaziuddin, Salabat Jang's eldest brother. After Ghaziuddin's death (1752) Salabat Jang and the Peshwa concluded a treaty at Bhalki (1752) by which the former ceded large slices of territory in Berar and Khandesh. 'The Marathas secured a continuous belt of territory all along the western boundary of the Hyderabad State right up to the territories of Sindhia and Holkar'. Moreover, Balaji fully utilized his friendly relations with Salabat Jang in extending his own power in the Mysore region. But the situation changed in 1757-58; the Peshwa invaded Salabat Jang's dominions and secured a promise for surrender of a large slice of territory (treaty of Sakharkharda, 1758).

In 1759 Salabat Jang, deserted by the French, became a puppet in the hands of his younger brother Nizam Ali who became the *de facto* ruler of the Hyderabad State. The Peshwa occupied the important fortress of Ahmadnagar. This was followed by the Udgir campaign (1759-60) led by Sadashiv Rao Bhau. The Marathas captured Burhanpur (with the great fort of Asirgarh), Daulatabad and Bijapur. Salabat Jang and Nizam Ali were defeated at Udgir, near Bidar (1760). Peace was made: the terms included cession of territory worth 62 lakhs

with the forts of Asirgarh, Daulatabad, Bijapur, Ahmadnagar and Burhanpur. These terms were too harsh for Nizam Ali, and the disaster of the Marathas at Panipat (1761) enabled him to deprive the Marathas of much of the fruits of their remarkable military success.

Fall of Angrias

The relations of the Angrias with the Peshwas had never been happy. Baji Rao weakened them by dividing their ancestral possessions between Shambhuji and Manaji. After Shambhuji's death he was succeeded by his half-brother Tulaji. He defied Balaji by withholding his tribute, by invading the Peshwa's territories, and by declaring his support for Tara Bai. He was proud and self-confident, having in his service a considerable army and a fleet of war ships. He was a terror to the maritime powers of the west coast, including the English.

Balaji was anxious to suppress Tulaji, but he had no strong fleet. So he turned for aid to the English at Bombay. A treaty was concluded in 1755, providing that the English would command the Anglo-Maratha fleet and attack from the sea while the Peshwa's forces would attack from the land. Early in 1756 Tulaji was defeated on land by the Peshwa's forces; his entire fleet was destroyed and Gheria (Vijaydurg) was occupied by the English. The occupation of Gheria by the English was not one of the terms of the treaty, but it was not surrendered to the Peshwa before certain advantageous terms were conceded by him. By a treaty concluded in 1756 the English secured possession of the forts of Bankot and Himmatgarh with some adjacent villages, relief in respect of import duty, and exclusion of the Dutch from trade in the Peshwa's territories. The Peshwa annexed Tulaji's territories and kept him a prisoner for life.

Balaji's determination to put down the 'recalcitrant and defiant Tulaji Angria' adversely affected the interests of the Marathas in two respects. The Maratha fleet organized by the Angrias was destroyed, but the Peshwa did not create a new navy which could uphold the Maratha power on the west coast. The English strengthened themselves in two ways: they destroyed a powerful naval rival, and secured much money and gold at Gheria. Balaji failed to realize the political danger coming from the English who had already secured considerable power in Karnatak. The English did not help him in destroying the power and forts of the Sidis when he took Underi in 1759.

North India : Marathas in Rajasthan (1748-60)

The civil war in Jaipur ended with the accession of Madho Singh and the people's rising against the Marathas (1750-51). In Marwar a war of succession began on the death of Abhay Singh (1749) who had fought against the Marathas in Gujarat as Mughal *subahdar*. The claimants were his son Ram Singh and his paternal uncle Bakht Singh. The latter secured the throne without Maratha aid. A war of succession had been raging in Bundi since 1729; it had been provoked by Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur and the Marathas had intervened. Umed Singh, who came out finally successful in 1748, 'felt his energies contracted by the dominant influence and avarice of the insatiable Marathas through whose means he had recovered his capital'.

The three wars of succession left the Rajput States under a heavy debt due to the Marathas as the price of their armed support. As the Rajput princes made no payment except under military coercion, a Maratha army under Jayappa Sindhia invaded Marwar in 1751 and again in 1754-55. In 1757-59 the Peshwa's brother, Raghunath Rao, as also Dattaji Sindhia and Malhar Rao Holkar, led campaigns in Rajasthan. The rulers of Marwar, Mewar, Kotah and Jaipur suffered from their depredations. But the Marathas obtained no decisive result, and Malhar Rao Holkar hastened towards Delhi at the beginning of 1760. Throughout the year 1760 'the Maratha interests in Rajasthan remained unsettled and uncared for'.

North India: Marathas and imperial politics (1750-60)

The direct interference of the Marathas in imperial politics began during the weak reign of Ahmad Shah. His *wazir* Safdar Jang, who was also *subahdar* of Oudh, made earnest efforts to suppress the Rohilla chiefs of Rohilkhand and the Bangesh Afghans of Farrukhabad. He secured the military aid of Jayappa Sindhia and Malhar Rao Holkar in 1750-52. On the conclusion of military operations in this region Safdar Jang found himself called upon to meet Ahmad Shah Abdali who occupied Lahore early in 1752. He arranged for a treaty with the Peshwa (1752) with a view to 'placing the Marathas practically in possession of the north-western frontier province though under the Emperor's suzerainty, so that it would be their interest to resist Abdali and the Emperor would be relieved of the task of defending it'. One-fourth of the *chauth* of the *subahs* of the Punjab and Sind was to be granted to the Mara-

thas for their military expenses in addition to 50 *lakhs* for their armed support to the Emperor. The Peshwa was to be appointed *subahdar* of Ajmer and Agra. He was to govern these *subahs* in conformity with the established rules of the Mughal Empire. He would be responsible for suppressing all enemies of the Mughal Empire—foreign invaders and domestic rebels alike. This arrangement would have marked the fulfilment of Shahu's dream of 'a Mughal-Maratha alliance for the governance of India as a whole'. But Safdar Jang lost his *wazirship* and retired to Oudh in 1753, and power in the imperial court passed to Imad-ul-Mulk, a grandson of Nizam-ul-Mulk. He terrorised the helpless Emperor with Maratha help, secured the office of *wazir*, dethroned Ahmad Shah and placed Alamgir II, a grandson of Bahadur Shah, on the imperial throne (1754).

'There has never been a *wazir* of Delhi whose rule was so barren of good result and so full of misery to himself and to the empire, to his friends and foes alike, as Imad-ul-Mulk's'. At first he 'clung like a helpless infant to the breast of the Marathas'; but being unable to pay 'the cash nexus on which alone Maratha friendship depended', he agreed to Ahmad Shah Abdali's project of ousting the Marathas from the Doab and Shujauddaula of Oudh, son and successor of Safdar Jang, from provincial governorship (1757). 'This drew Shujauddaula, Suraj Mal Jat and the Marathas together, and left Imad-ul-Mulk utterly friendless during the absence of Abdali from India. Worst of all, he offended the dread master of the Durrani legions (i.e., Abdali) more than once'.

In 1757-58 large Maratha armies halted in North India and established their domination at Lahore. 'The Mughal empire and the imperial family passed helplessly under Maratha control'. Towards the middle of 1758 they withdrew from North India; but they returned early in 1759 under the leadership of Dattaji Sindhia, besieged Delhi where Imad-ul-Mulk shut himself, and carried on military operations against the powerful Rohilla chief Najibuddaula. The *wazir* became desperate when he heard that Abdali was coming again and the Marathas had failed to crush the Rohilla chief who was the invader's ally. He murdered the puppet Emperor Alamgir II (November 1759). With the end of this miserable Emperor's nominal reign ended Imad-ul-Mulk's office as *wazir*, 'though he desperately clung to the name for some years after'.

Alamgir II's eldest son and expected successor, prince Ali Gauhar (Shah Alam), had already been forced by Imad-ul-Mulk to leave Delhi. He lived for many years as 'a homeless wanderer on the face of the earth'. After murdering Alamgir II the *wazir* placed on the throne Shah Jahan III, a grandson of Aurangzib's youngest son Kam Bakhsh. The Marathas occupied Delhi in August 1760. It was a spectacular success, but it produced no lasting result.

North India: Maratha expeditions (1753-58)

Raghunath Rao began his march from the Deccan with a large army in 1753. Passing through Rajasthan, he secured promises of tribute from several States including Jaipur. Then he proceeded to the Jat country where military operations, including futile attacks on Dig and Kumbher, were undertaken. Approaching Delhi, he lent support to Imad-ul-Mulk in replacing Ahmad Shah by Alamgir II on the imperial throne (1754). As the Mughal Government was unable to fulfil his monetary demands, lands in the Gangetic Doab were alienated to the Marathas. He moved with his army to that region. 'Everywhere his Deccanis plundered as they moved on'. He returned to Poona in 1755.

Raghunath's second Northern expedition began in 1757. Marching through Rajasthan, he attacked Delhi and expelled Najibuddaula who was Abdali's agent in occupation of the imperial city. After military operations in the Doab, the Marathas, led by Raghunath Rao and Malhar Rao Holkar, proceeded towards the Punjab and occupied Lahore (1758). Then began their homeward journey.

Raghunath's two Northern expeditions brought little profit—financial or political—to the Maratha State. He 'came back from this enterprise without having secured a pice for the Poona treasury but saddled with a debt of 80 lakhs to bankers, besides the arrears due to his troops'. Politically the alienation of Najibuddaula as also of Abdali (who was not likely to acquiesce in the establishment of Maratha rule in the Punjab) was a grave blunder. The only friends of the Marathas in the North were 'the impotent and faithless Imad-ul-Mulk and the invalid poltroon Ahmad Khan Bengash' of Farrukhabad. The Rajputs and the Jats were alienated.

North India: Marathas in the Punjab (1758-59)

After securing the cession of the *subahs* of Lahore and

Multan from the Mughal Emperor Ahmad Shah (1752) Abdali left the charge of the Punjab to its Mughal governor Muin-ul-Mulk who had pledged his allegiance to him. After his death (1753) the reality of power in the Punjab affairs passed to his ambitious and crafty wife, Mughlani Begam. In 1756 she was made captive by the imperial *wazir*, Imad-ul-Mulk. Then followed Abdali's conquest of the Punjab (1756) and the appointment of his son **Timur Shah** as governor of the province (1757). His administration broke down in course of a year. The government of the Jalandhar Doab was entrusted to Adina Beg Khan who had been administering that region for many years and had acquired local **influence** by his understanding with the Sikhs. Alienated by Timur Shah, he called the Marathas to his defence. A vast **Maratha** army under Raghunath Rao was then stationed near Delhi.

Early in 1758 Raghunath, accompanied by Malhar Rao Holkar, entered the Punjab. He was joined by Adina Beg Khan and the Sikhs. Sirhind fell. Lahore was occupied and the Afghans were expelled (April 1758). Timur Shah fled, pursued by the Marathas up to the Chenab. They did not cross the river because it was too deep for fording and the districts beyond it were inhabited mostly by the Afghans. There is evidence, however, that the Marathas collected revenue for a few months from the trans-Chenab region although they did not hold the Attock fort.

Raghunath Rao returned from the Punjab after leaving the province in charge of Adina Beg Khan. Confusion followed the latter's death a few months afterwards (October 1758). The Peshwa sent a large army under Dattaji Sindhia who reached the eastern bank of the Sutlej (April 1759) and sent Sabaji Sindhia to Lahore to take over the governorship of the province. Within a few months a strong army sent by Abdali crossed the Indus. Sabaji fell back precipitately, abandoning the entire province of the Punjab to the Afghans. Abdali established his government at Lahore, resumed his march and entered Sirhind (November 1759).

The Maratha adventure in the Punjab has been acclaimed by some historians as 'carrying the Hindu paramountcy (*Hindu-padpadshahi*) up to Attock'. It is doubtful if the Maratha army actually advanced as far as Attock, and the collection of revenue in the trans-Chenab districts was a purely temporary affair. As a matter of fact the Maratha hold on Lahore, including the

months of Adina Beg's governorship, lasted for a brief period. The Peshwa did not realize that the Punjab could not be retained without keeping a large well-equipped force constantly on the spot. This was not possible because the necessary funds were not available and no Maratha soldier could stand the winter of Lahore. No first-rate Maratha general was posted in the Punjab as warden of the north-west frontier. The Peshwa sanctioned 'a provocatively advanced frontier', which made a war with Abdali inevitable, but he made no adequate arrangement for its defence.

North India: Bhau's expedition (1760)

On return towards Delhi (May 1759) after the reconquest of the Punjab Dattaji Sindhia was involved in hostilities with Najibuddaula in Rohilkhand. He suffered defeats, retreated across the Jumna towards Panipat (December 1759), and heard that Abdali's forces, advancing from Sirhind, had occupied Ambala. His resistance failed; he was killed in a battle with Abdali at Barari, some ten miles north of Delhi (January 1760). Jankoji Sindhia fled away in head-long rout to Rajasthan. Malhar Rao Holkar was routed by the Afghans at Sikandrabad. 'The Maratha army in Hindustan ceased to exist'.

When the news of these disasters reached the Peshwa at Poona he realized that 'all his gains in North India had been wiped out, and he must again fight for the Maratha control over the Delhi Empire and build up his supremacy in Hindustan from the very foundations'. This crisis could be met only by promptly sending a very strong army under a leader occupying an indisputably high position. The Peshwa's choice fell upon his cousin Sadashiv Rao Bhau who, in addition to proved ability in administration and finance, had earned reputation as an organizer of victory in the Udgir campaign against the Nizam. This young chief, not yet fully thirty years of age, was to be associated as guardian and manager of all affairs with the Peshwa's eldest son Vishwas Rao, a lad of seventeen, who was to be the nominal commander-in-chief of the expeditionary army. They were to be joined by experienced chiefs, and by Ibrahim Khan Gardi who was the chief of the artillery.

The Bhau started in March 1760 at the head of 30,000 soldiers, ill-equipped with insufficient ammunitions and inadequately provided in respect of funds. On his way he met Malhar Rao Holkar and Suraj Mal Jat; the latter provided vast quantities of food stuffs and other supplies to the Maratha army

Unable to cross the Jumna into the Doab on account of the opposition of the local Rajput landlords who had been dispossessed by the Marathas, he proceeded *via* Agra to Delhi and captured the imperial capital (July 1760). There he deposed Shah Jahan III and proclaimed Alamgir II's son, Shah Alam II, as Emperor.

The Maratha cause was weakened by the desertion of Suraj Mal who remembered the unprovoked Maratha siege of Kumbher in 1754, failed to get satisfactory assurances about future security against Maratha depredations, and resented the Bhau's insulting behaviour. Shujauddaula and Najibuddaula decided to join Abdali. The Rajput princes kept aloof. The Marathas had no longer a single friend left north of the Narmada. The Bhau provoked hostility in his own camp by disregarding Holkar's advice and lowering him in the eyes of the army. The insulted veteran, who had the widest experience of North Indian affairs, made the 'angry remark that if these proud Brahmins of Poona were not humbled by the enemy they would make him and other captains of the Maratha caste wash their soiled clothes'. He 'took care to save himself out of the wreck of the Maratha army' at Panipat.

The capture of Delhi restored the prestige of Maratha arms which had been ruined by the defeat and death of Dattaji Sindhia and the rout of Malhar Rao Holkar at Sikandrabad a few months earlier. But the Bhau's food and fodder supplies were cut off by Abdali's forces; in September 1760 there was starvation in his camp. Moreover, he found that his expenditure was more than three times his income; there was no allied prince to supply funds, and no banker was prepared to offer credit.

With a view to cutting off Abdali's communications with his own country and bringing him to an action on the west bank of the Jumna, the Bhau left Delhi, captured Kunjpura, and proceeded to Panipat (October 1760). Abdali advanced from the Doab, crossed the Jumna at Baghpat, and reached Panipat (November 1760).

Third battle of Panipat (1761)

At Panipat the two rival armies stood entrenched, face to face, for more than two months. There were skirmishes and minor battles. The Afghan cavalry patrols dominated the environs of the Maratha camp and cut off its communications as also food supply. Gradually despair and terror seized the starv-

ing Marathas. They decided to launch a direct attack on the Afghans when there was no food for men and no grass for horses, and when filth and stench 'made the confines of the entrenchment a living hell'.

The Bhau's army marched out to battle on 15 January 1761. The battle actually began about four hours after day-break. Vishwas Rao was shot dead at quarter past two. Soon afterwards the Bhau sought a soldier's death and found it. Among leading chiefs who met death were Jankoji Sindhia, Tukoji Sindhia and Ibrahim Khan Gardi. Mahadji Sindhia received wounds, which lamed him for life. 'It was a nationwide disaster like Flodden field; there was not a home in Maharashtra that had not to mourn the loss of a member, and several houses their very heads. An entire generation of leaders was cut off at one stroke'. Apart from those who fell on the field, many fugitives lost their lives during their long flight without food or rest. About 50,000 men and women were saved by the kindness and hospitality of Suraj Mal.

The crushing defeat of the Marathas is easily explained. Numerically the Afghans had considerable superiority. Against 60,000 Afghans and their Indian allies actually present in the field, supported by 80,000 behind the fighting line, the Bhau had 45,000 troops in the field and 15,000 *pindaris* in the rear. The Afghan army had better training and discipline, and it was better organized. Moreover, 'a famished army on less than half dead country mares met the finest cavalry in Asia, mounted on thoroughbreds purchased straight from their breeding grounds in Khurasan and Transoxiana'. Abdali had superiority in artillery; he employed 'the most efficient mobile artillery known in that age'. Although the field guns of the Marathas were of larger calibre than those of the Afghans, they could not be dragged forward with the advancing troops and became useless as the battle developed. The Bhau had no worthy and dependable lieutenants comparable to Abdali's front-rank officers. Malhar Rao Holkar did not exchange fire till after the contest at the centre had been decided in Abdali's favour, and at the last stage he fled away. Abdali was a far greater military leader and strategist than the Bhau.

The defeat became practically inevitable after the Bhau's postponement of battle for two and a half months. He kept his army on the defensive in a besieged camp until starvation compelled him to make the last desperate effort for escape. It is

useless to blame him for having given up the traditional Maratha method of guerilla warfare. In view of the geography of the great North Indian plain, which was not intersected like Maharashtra by natural barriers, pitched battles were unavoidable. But he should have made adequate provision for the compact, orderly retreat of his army under proper leaders in the event of an almost certain defeat. The tragedy of this lack of foresight was aggravated by his self-sought death at the close of the battle.

From the political point of view the defeat was due largely to the alienation of the Rajputs and the Jats and the failure to neutralize Shujauddaula and Najibuddaula. While half of Abdali's army was composed of troops furnished by his Indian allies, the valiant Rajputs and the Jats did not fight on the Maratha side. The clue to this situation lies in 'the total diplomatic failure on the part of the master at Poona (i.e., the Peshwa) who dictated, and the doomed agent near Delhi (i.e., the Bhau) who carried out, his North Indian policy'.

Consequences of Panipat

Some modern Maratha writers argue that, although the Marathas suffered terrible losses in man power at Panipat, the battle did not destroy the Maratha power in North India, nor did it essentially shake the Maratha Empire as a whole. Abdali made unsuccessful efforts to conclude peace with the Peshwa and Suraj Mal, and in the following years he failed to crush the Sikhs in the Punjab. There was a revival of the Maratha power in North India under Peshwa Madhav Rao I (1761-72). After the death of Najibuddaula (1770) who administered Delhi as Abdali's agent after Panipat, the Marathas restored the exiled Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II to the capital of his ancestors (1772). Mahadji Sindhia occupied Delhi in 1788, and it was from his successor Daulat Rao Sindhia that the English wrested the imperial capital in 1803. In South India the Marathas secured victories against Haidar Ali and the Nizam. While Mysore fell in 1799 under the blows of the English, the Peshwa's dominions survived till 1818. Considering the fortunes of the Maratha Empire for six decades following the disaster at Panipat it may be said that the holocaust of 1761 was 'like a natural visitation destroying life, but leading to no decisive political consequences'.

This historical assessment needs modification. The permanent loss of the Punjab to the Marathas demonstrated their in-

capacity to play an imperial role, for they had failed to protect India's most vital strategic frontier. Again, Panipat hastened the rise of the English power. 'The El Dorado of Bihar and Bengal was closed to the Marathas beyond the possibility of conquest'. Oudh swallowed Rohilkhand and found security against the Maratha menace under the protection of the English. The Maratha power in North India remained confined to Rajasthan and Bundelkhand. In these two regions, as also in Malwa, the Maratha interest was looked after by Sindhia and Holkar, not the Peshwa. The Maratha *Empire* became a *confederacy* in which the Peshwa held a nominal overlordship, and even this was ended by the treaty of Bassein (1802). During the weak rule of Baji Rao II (1796-1818) the Marathas completely lost that unity under the active leadership of the Peshwa which had enabled them to build an empire in the pre-Panipat era. Much of the afflictions of the Marathas in the post-Panipat era was due to the 'guilty ambition of Raghunath Rao, the most infamous character in Maratha history', for whom the path was left open and easy by the death of Vishwas Rao and Sadashiv Rao Bhau at Panipat. 'Other losses time could have made good, but this was the greatest mischief done by the debacle at Panipat'.

Estimate of Balaji Baji Rao

Balaji Baji Rao died (23 June 1761) six months after the battle of Panipat. His health was already showing an alarming decline, and the awful catastrophe—particularly the death of Vishwas Rao and Sadashiv Rao Bhau—hastened his end. 'It was a dismal sunset to the glorious noon of his father's and his own reign', and he was personally not a little responsible for it. 'Though a man of skilful address, of influence in counsel and of ability in the field, he was inferior to his father both as a soldier and as a politician'. He improved the administration in the territories under the immediate care of the Peshwa. He not only promoted the interest of the Brahmins but also provided benefits for other sections of the population. Grant Duff says: 'The condition of the whole population was in his time improved and the Maratha peasantry, sensible of the comparative amelioration which they began to enjoy, have ever since blessed the days of Nana Saheb Peshwa'. Though a successful administrator in the Maratha homeland, he lacked the gift of high statesmanship which alone can build and preserve an empire. He was not able to centralize the power of the Maratha State in a single hand and direct all affairs—political and military

—according to a common policy and a common plan. He aimed at territorial expansion in the South as also in the North, and in the east he advanced as far as Bihar; but he did not possess adequate financial resources for meeting his huge military expenses. Instead of conciliating the Rajputs and the Jats he and his lieutenants alienated them. Instead of extending a give-and-take policy towards the Rohillas and the Nawab of Oudh they drove them to Abdali's camp. Reckless exploitation rather than consolidation of territories through well-planned and generous administration became the essence of Maratha imperial policy. Panipat was a decisive revelation of its failure.

5. MARATHA SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

Chhatrapati and Peshwa

During the eighteenth century the political organization of the Marathas at the highest level was marked by curious contradictions. Shahu formally acknowledged the supremacy of the Mughal Emperor and did not repudiate the legitimacy of the Mughal claim to suzerainty even when he was in a position to do so. When the Peshwa built the Delhi Darwaza gate at Poona the Raja protested because in his view a gate facing the north would mean defiance and insult to the Padshah. The Peshwas found it convenient to continue this fiction. Baji Rao I caused no damage to the imperial capital when he took his army to Delhi. Balaji Baji Rao accepted appointment as Mughal *subahdar* of Malwa. Mahadji Sindhia, following this traditional policy, obtained for the Peshwa the status of deputy (*naib-i-munaib*) as well as commander-in-chief (*bakhshi-ul-mamalik*) from the puppet Emperor Shah Alam II. Nana Fadnavis in his letter spoke of the Emperor as *prithvipati* (master of the world). The term *sarbabhauma* (lord of all), applied to Aurangzib by Shambhuji's wife during her captivity in his camp, was repeated in respect of his effete successor in a Marathi letter of the mid-eighteenth century.

Thus the Maratha Empire was—from the Maratha point of view—not a sovereign State; it was a vassal State owing allegiance to the Mughal Empire. The nominal head of this State was the *Chhatrapati*, a descendant of Shivaji, who appointed the principal officers. Shahu exercised some control over policy and administration; his successors were prisoners in the fort of Satara, but they continued to exercise the function of appointing the Peshwas even though it was a mere formality. The

royal prisoner, though slighted in private, was honoured in public.

The *de facto* ruler of the Maratha Empire was the Peshwa. Originally the Peshwa was the chief among the eight ministers constituting Shivaji's council (*Ashta Pradhan*); but he came to occupy the second rank when Rajaram created the office of *Pratinidhi* in 1698. The Peshwa's office was not hereditary in the days of Shivaji, Shambhuji, Rajaram and Shivaji III. The principle of heredity emerged in the reign of Shahu: Balaji Vishwanath and his descendants held the office from 1713 till its extinction in 1818. The transfer of power from the Raja to the Peshwa was completed by Shahu's grant of plenary authority to Balaji Baji Rao before his death and the imprisonment of Ram Raja at Satara by Tara Bai.

The rise of the Peshwas to the predominant position in the State was gradual. It was due partly to Shahu's love of ease, and largely to the ability of Balaji Vishwanath, Baji Rao and Balaji Rao who built up the Maratha Empire. Its first important consequence was the destruction of the solidarity of the constitution which Shivaji's *Ashta Pradhan* council was designed to maintain. The other ministers became the subordinates of the Peshwa who controlled them as the vice-regent of the *Chhatrapati*. Another important consequence of the rise of the Peshwas to the supreme power was the division of the Maratha feudal nobles (*sardars*) into two distinct categories. The old nobles—the Angrias, the Bhonsles, the Gaikwars—regarded the Peshwa as their equal and obeyed him only as the deputy of the *Chhatrapati*. The new nobles who rose into prominence under the Peshwa's patronage—the Sindhias, the Holkars, the Rastias—regarded themselves as his servants. Nana Fadnavis expressed their sentiment as follows: 'We have long eaten his bread and he has favoured us as his children'. Naturally their loyalty to the Peshwa was greater, and their obedience to him more unreserved, than those of the old nobles. The latter claimed precedence over the new nobles in respect of ceremonial as also in the field of battle.

Feudalization

During the Peshwa period the feudal nobles, both new and old, exercised practically independent authority within their estates or fiefs (*saranjams*). The Peshwa's control over them was symbolized by his prerogative of appointing their chief officers. The *diwans* of the Gaikwar, the Holkar and the Sindhia were

always appointed by the Peshwa; but his right of interference in the management of their estates was not acknowledged. The nobles were expected to provide troops and render military service in return for their estates. The Peshwa had his own estates. Thus 'he was the head of the feudal nobles and one of them at the same time'.

The Peshwas knew that their ascendancy might provoke combinations of the nobles against them. To protect themselves they 'divided the revenues of any one district between several Maratha chiefs, who generally considered it beneath their dignity as fighting men to learn the art of reading and writing and were at the same time exceedingly resentful of any supposed infringement of their financial proprietary rights'. This application of the principle of 'divide and rule' to revenue administration involved the Maratha chiefs in perpetual jealousies and feuds which minimised the chances of their united action against the Peshwas. But the long-term effect of this system was disastrous, for it prevented combination against a common enemy and contributed in no small measure to the downfall of the Maratha Empire.

The Peshwa's primacy became nominal after the death of Madhav Rao I (1772). During the First Anglo-Maratha War (1775-82) and the long minority of Peshwa Madhav Rao Narayan (1774-96) not only the great Maratha chiefs—Sindhia, Holkar, Bhonsle, Gaikwar—but also many lesser nobles followed their own interests and acted on their own. 'All the evils inherent in the feudal system now came to the surface'; the result was 'the conversion of the organic whole into an inorganic mass'.

Huzur Daftar

The focus of the Peshwa's administration was his secretariat at Poona, styled the *Huzur Daftar*. Divided into several departments and bureaux, it employed a large staff, preserved the records of all branches of the administration, and dealt with matters relating to revenues and expenditure, alienations of public revenue (in the form of *inams*, *saranjams*, etc.), and the budgets of the civil, military and religious establishments. As the *de facto* head of the State the Peshwa decided a large variety of issues affecting religion and social custom, such as the remarriage of widows, the sale of unmarried girls, arrangements for dowry and adoption, the appointment of officiating priests for non-Hindu congregations, etc.

Village communities

The old self-contained and self-supporting village community did not lose its importance during the rule of the Peshwas. It represented the democratic element in a governmental system which was predominantly feudal and aristocratic. Elphinstone wrote after the fall of the Maratha Empire: 'These (village) communities contain, in miniatures, all the materials of a State within themselves and are almost sufficient to protect their members, if all other governments were withdrawn'.

The chief man in the village was the *patil*. He was the chief revenue officer, the chief police magistrate as also the chief judicial officer. He was the intermediary between the villagers and the Peshwa's administration. He was paid by the villagers, not by the Peshwa. He was assisted by the *kulkarni*, the village clerk and record-keeper. The *potdar* tested the coins to see whether they really had the prescribed weight and proportion of metal. The industrial requirements of the village were met by twelve artisans (*balutas*) who received a share of the crops and other perquisites in return for their services to the community.

District and provincial administration

Different terms (*taraf*, *pargana*, *sarkar*, *subah*) were used indiscriminately to indicate administrative divisions. The officers in charge of the bigger divisions were called *mamlatdars*; over the small divisions were placed the *kamavisdars*. They were directly subordinate to the *Huzur Daftar*; but in Khandesh, Gujarat and Karnatak the *kamavisdars* were subordinate to *sarsubhedars*. They were in charge of all branches of the district administration, such as agriculture, revenue assessment, industries, civil and criminal justice, the control of the local militia (*sihbandis*) and the police, as also the investigation of social and religious disputes.

Some restraint was put on the *mamlatdar's* opportunities for speculation and maladministration by the *deshmukh* and the *deshpande*. They were the descendants of the *zamindars* whom Shivaji had turned out of their hereditary office, leaving them in the enjoyment of their customary dues. They were deprived of powers but assured of fair incomes. This system was continued by the Peshwas and, in Elphinstone's opinion, it was 'attended with beneficial effects'. 'During the Peshwa period the *deshmukh* and the *deshpande* became the sincere friends of the *rayats* and never failed to bring to the notice of the Peshwa their grievances'. The *mamlatdar's* accounts were not passed by

the *Huzur Daftar* unless supported by corresponding accounts from the *deshmukh* and the *deshpande*. The *deshmukh* maintained records relating to estates, alienations and transfer of properties, and these were called for in all disputes connected with lands. In practice, these safeguards against the *mamlatdars'* malpractices not infrequently proved illusory.

The functions of the *deshmukhs* and the *deshpandes* as agents for controlling corruption were supplemented by those entrusted to the provincial hereditary officers called *darakhbars*. They were used as a check on the chief officers of every department, the army and the navy included. They could not be dismissed by the *mamlatdars*.

Sources of income

The principal sources of the State revenue during the Peshwa period were: (1) land-revenue, (2) miscellaneous taxes (such as a tax of one year's rent in ten on the lands held by the *deshmukh* and the *deshpande*, a tax on land irrigated from well, a house tax, an annual fee for the testing of weights and measures, a succession duty, a tax on marriage and the remarriage of widows, extraordinary levy on landholders known as *karja patti* or *jasti patti*, etc.), (3) customs duties (*mohatarfa* or taxes on trades and professions, and *zakat* or duties on purchase and sale), and (4) income drawn from forests, private mints, and fees for administration of justice.

These sources were substantially supplemented by the *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* which were originally payments made by territories under the government of other powers desiring protection from plunder. The proceeds of the *sardeshmukhi* were originally reserved for the State. The proceeds of the *chauth* were divided into four shares: (1) 25 per cent (*babti*) reserved for the head of the State; (2) 66 per cent (*mokasa*) granted to the feudal chiefs for the maintenance of troops, (3) 6 per cent (*sahotra*) granted to the *Sachiv*; (4) 3 per cent (*nadgaunda*) granted to various persons at the pleasure of the head of the State. When the territories paying *chauth* were brought under Maratha rule the remaining three-fourths of their revenues (known as *jagir*) were assigned in various proportions to different individuals. A somewhat similar arrangement was made about the sub-division of the proceeds of the *sardeshmukhi* during the Peshwa period. The entire system involved 'a multiplicity of individual claims upon the revenues of a single tract or village', leading not only to great complication

of the accounts but also to jealousies and feuds among the claimants.

Land-revenue

Agricultural lands in the villages were generally divided between two classes of holders. The *mirasdars* represented the descendants of original settlers who cleared the forest and introduced cultivation. They had permanent proprietary rights. Their lands were heritable and saleable. They were immune from eviction as long as they paid rent. The *upris* were strangers and tenants-at-will. They cultivated lands with the permission and under the supervision of the Peshwa's district officers.

The assessment on the village lands was based on survey of the cultivated area. The lands were divided for revenue purposes into three classes: superior, ordinary, inferior. The condition of irrigation and the nature of the crops were taken into account at the time of assessment. Lands under cultivation for a long time had to pay higher rates than those recently brought under the plough. Lenient assessment was the incentive offered for bringing waste lands into cultivation. Payment was made both in kind and cash. The scale of land-revenue as also the manner of payment differed in different parts of the country. Remission of the assessment and advances of money and grain were granted to the peasantry in times of drought and distress.

In the lands which were the private property of the Peshwa (pastures, gardens, orchards, cultivated lands) leases were generally granted to the *upris* under the authority of the *mamlatdar* or *kamavisdar* who recovered the dues from the tenants.

'The revenue policy of the Peshwas was based on the principle of securing the prosperity of the tax-payer'. In 1739 a British officer found the Peshwa's territory in 'a very flourishing condition'. In the days of Madhav Rao I the peasantry were contented and tolerably well off. Arthur Wellesley (later Duke of Wellington) found the Maratha country highly cultivated.

Justice and police

The Maratha judicial system was rudimentary and simple. There were no codified laws or rules of procedure. In both civil and criminal cases decisions were based upon custom and rules or formulae drawn from ancient *Smriti* works. Trial by ordeal—ordeals by fire and water—was in vogue; sometimes there was an appeal to divine intervention in the form of an oath in a sacred temple.

The judicial officer in the village was the *patil*. Above him were the *mamlatdar* and the *sarsubhedar*. At the top was the Peshwa or his minister who represented the *Chhatrapati*. There was no separation of the executive and the judiciary in these cases. In towns learned persons well-versed in the *shastras* were appointed judges (*nyayadhish*). They performed judicial duties only.

In civil cases arbitration was the first step, for the main object was the amicable settlement of the dispute. If arbitration failed the case was transferred for decision to a *panchayat*, appointed by the *patil* in the village and by a leading merchant (*shete mahajan*) in urban areas. The trial by *panchayat* resembled the trial by jury. Its decision was generally confirmed and upheld by the Government unless the members of the *panch* were charged with corruption. It is not certain whether they got any allowance for their services. Although the powers of the *panchayat* were limited, 'the peasantry did obtain a fair modicum of rude justice' from it.

In criminal cases the trying authorities were the same as in civil cases; above the local officials stood the Peshwa and the Chief Justice at Poona. A *panchayat* was not so frequently appointed as in civil cases.

Capital punishment seems to have been unknown in the days of the first three Peshwas. Murder and treason were punished with fine, confiscation of property, and imprisonment. For adultery female offenders were condemned to slavery and penal servitude. Mutilation for offences like treason, murder and dacoity came into vogue in the second half of the eighteenth century. The prison arrangements were primitive. Some of the larger hill-forts were used for the detention of prisoners; there they languished in the gravest discomfort.

In the detection of crimes the village watchmen (*jaglas*)—usually the degraded Mahars and Mangs—were helped by criminal tribes such as the Ramoshis, Bhils and Kolis. The village police was under the *patil*, the district police under the *mamlatdar*. Unless the stolen property could be recovered or the offence could be traced to some other village the police and the criminal classes had to compensate the sufferer.

In big cities the police was placed under the *kotwal* whose duties included the regulation of prices and taking of census. The efficiency of the metropolitan police at Poona in the days of Baji Rao II extorted Elphinstone's admiration.

Maratha government outside Maharashtra

Outside the *swarajya* the Maratha system of government was 'almost predatory'. It was virtually a system of spoliation which 'killed the goose that laid the golden eggs'. In the territories which the Peshwas overran—in the North as also in the South—the Marathas 'remained strangers like their former Muslim overlords'. As a result 'they could never count on local support when threatened by an outside enemy'. The third battle of Panipat brought out this basic defect of the Maratha imperial system.

From the Maratha point of view the collection of *chauth* involved no administrative responsibility in respect of the territories concerned. 'The Maratha Government in Hindustan had no competent civil service, no stable administration and no wise foreign policy'. A British officer wrote to the Governor-General in 1795: 'The Maratha Government in Hindustan is ill-qualified for permanent conquest or civil administration, however formidable may be the means which it possesses of ravage and devastation'.

In the territories on which the *chauth* was levied the system of collection was decentralized; shares were assigned to different Maratha chiefs in every region or district, and every share-holder selected his own agency for collection. 'The revenues were farmed out to Banias or left to their Brahmin *diwans* and Prabhu clerks; and these men were notorious for their love of peculation and ignorance of the economic law that revenue could not be increased simply by squeezing the peasantry. The rapacious and inefficient government of the Maratha agents in Hindustan kept lawlessness always raging in their *jagirs* and the desolate land could yield no produce for feeding the population or paying for the administration'.

This 'rapacious and inefficient government' was superimposed on the old Mughal system of collection of revenue through the *zamindars*. The *zamindars* were not displaced by the Marathas who treated them as payers of revenue; but they did not pay unless coerced at the point of the sword. The peasantry had to submit to the exactions of the *zamindars* and the Maratha revenue-collectors. Their capacity to pay was seriously affected by the Maratha raids which devastated the countryside.

Army

The War of Independence changed the character of the Maratha army. Shivaji's army was under central control; he

had a distrust for feudal levies. After Shambhuji's death (1689), when the Monarchy was virtually in abeyance, central control disappeared. The Maratha soldiers fighting against the Mughals were irregular groups led by different chiefs. This system was formalized during the reign of Shahu. The feudalization of the State resulted in the feudalization of the army. Although the Peshwas maintained some regiments under their immediate command, they relied mainly on the forces provided by the feudal nobles in terms of contracts relating to their estates (*saranjams*). They, on their part, sublet portions of their estates to subordinates on condition of providing the stipulated number of troops. When the feudal nobles fought among themselves, or against the Peshwa, they generally enjoyed the support of these subordinate grantees. The Peshwas' army was not a single fighting machine controlled by a central authority; it was a conglomeration of units controlled by many chiefs.

The racial composition of the army also changed. Shivaji's officers and soldiers were nearly all of them men of his own race, although there was a sprinkling of Muslims. The Peshwas and their feudal nobles employed men of all races and creeds: Rajputs, Sikhs, Rohillas, Sindhis, Arabs, Abyssinians, Gosains, Karnatakis, Telingas, Bedars, the Christian and Shenvi subjects of the Portuguese. This heterogeneous army could not be inspired by the common ideal which had inspired Shivaji's forces. 'The real Marathas were relegated almost entirely to the cavalry, in which their horse-craft and knowledge of horse-breeding proved of the highest value; the infantry was mostly drawn from Northern India; and the artillery, which offered little attraction to the Maratha free-booter, was manned and commanded by Portuguese and Indian Christians'. In the second half of the eighteenth century, when the superiority of western tactics and discipline came to be realized, the door was opened to English, French, Portuguese, German, Swiss, Italian and Armenian adventurers who were mercenaries and had no common interest with their employers.

Before the introduction of the European methods in the Maratha army its main strength lay in the cavalry. The *siladars*, who fought on their own horses, were considered superior to the *bargirs* or hired troopers. The cavalry was remarkable for extreme mobility; its movement was not obstructed by encumbrances like baggage, tents, supplies or artillery. It avoided general engagements, and its primary objective was to do as

much mischief as possible to the enemy's country. But the light cavalry successfully used the strategy of sudden surprise on an unprepared enemy and complete envelopment of his position.

The artillery formed a separate department. Although the Marathas relied mainly on the English and the Portuguese for the supply of artillery and munitions, the Peshwas had their own factories for manufacturing cannons and cannon balls.

The Maratha infantry originally used simple weapons like the sword and the spear. This method failed against walled cities and camps guarded by artillery. Towards the middle of the eighteenth century a change came as a result of contact with the trained battalions of the English and the French. The Marathas remodelled their infantry as a supporting force for the cavalry. In the late eighteenth century Mahadji Sindhia had disciplined battalions under European officers and used them effectively against his Indian enemies. But the Marathas did not enlist in the brigades; these were manned by the Hindustanis. The predominance of the non-Marathas in the infantry reduced the Maratha cavalry to a secondary position.

The *pindaris*, who were plunderers by profession, were allowed to accompany the Maratha armies on every expedition—in return of a tax (*palpatti*). They shared their spoils with the Government which took 25 per cent of their booty. 'The property of friends and enemies fell equally a prey to their indistinguishable depredations'.

The forts were as primitive in construction and defence as they had been in the days of Shivaji. They provided little security against western weapons and strategy.

The Maratha army had lost the simplicity which was one of its special features in the days of Shivaji. The Maratha chiefs who marched to Panipat in 1761 needed, like the Mughal officers, costly tents, splendid equipments and luxuries of all sorts. Not only the feudal chiefs but even the ordinary troopers were accompanied by women. A large number of animals, deemed unnecessary in Shivaji's time, created congestion in the camps.

Navy

The Angrias, who were practically independent of the Peshwas, were responsible for the development of the Maratha navy after Shivaji. Balaji Baji Rao caused irreparable damage to the Maratha naval power by crushing Tulaji Angria. In the second half of the eighteenth century attempts were made to develop a commercial navy.

RISE OF BRITISH POWER

I. ANGLO-FRENCH STRUGGLE

European background

England and France fought on opposite sides in the War of the League of Augsburg (1689-97), which was concluded by the treaty of Ryswick (1697), as also in the War of the Spanish Succession, which was concluded by the treaty of Utrecht (1713). In the War of the Spanish Succession France and Holland were exhausted, but England suffered far less and went ahead commercially and politically. From 1713 to 1739 England enjoyed a period of peace; she, as also France, wished to uphold the treaty of Utrecht. Not only were there no hostilities between these two countries, but there was even at times an alliance or informal co-operation between them. The situation was changed by the outbreak of the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-48). There were two claimants to the Austrian dominions: Maria Theresa, the daughter and the heir-designate of the deceased Emperor Charles VI, and the Elector of Bavaria, the husband of his niece. England supported Maria Theresa, but France supported the Elector. The immediate issues involved in this war were European; but its impact was felt in America as also in India, for Anglo-French hostilities occurred in these regions far away from Europe.

English East India Company

At the time of Aurangzib's death the Company of London Merchants trading into the East Indies, formed in London in 1600, held three principal settlements in India: Madras (established in 1640), Bombay (acquired in 1668) and Calcutta (established in 1690). Each was placed in charge of a Council, the chief member of which was called Governor or President. Each Council controlled a number of subordinate factories. The settlements under a President constituted a *Presidency*. Madras was officially known as Presidency of St. George, and Calcutta as Presidency of Fort William. The Company acquired territorial rights at Madras through grants of Indian ruling authorities and at Bombay through a Charter of King Charles II of England; at Calcutta it had merely *zamindari* rights. Its position was strengthened in the three settlements—from the

point of view of English law—by certain powers conferred upon it by King George H's Charter of 1726.

At the close of the seventeenth century a rival Company was started in England. The two Companies were amalgamated in 1709. The shareholders were called 'proprietors'; assembled in a body called 'General Court' or 'Court of Proprietors', they exercised certain powers relating to the government of the Company. The management of the Company was vested in a 'Court of Directors', consisting of 24 members elected by the 'proprietors'. The 'Court of Directors' elected its Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

The Company was a body of private merchants. It was not subject to the direct control of the State, but its privileges were regulated by statutes of Parliament and royal charters. During the Prime Ministership of Sir Robert Walpole (1721-42) the policy of the British Government was to encourage peaceful trade. It supported the Company against the claims of the Ostend Company formed by the merchants of Flanders under a charter granted by the Austrian Emperor Charles VI in 1723. The Emperor had to suspend the Ostend Company in 1727 and suppress it four years later. There were other minor European rivals, but these failed to prosper. The Swedish East India Company, chartered in 1731, slowly declined. The Danes withdrew their factories in Bengal in 1714; but a new Company was started in 1729 and a fresh settlement was made in 1755 at Serampore, not far from Calcutta. During the early decades of the eighteenth century the Company's commerce at the three settlements steadily increased. Apart from the Indian trade there was considerable development of the trade in tea from China and coffee from the Red Sea ports.

French East India Company

The position of the French East India Company, formed in 1664, was far less satisfactory in the early years of the eighteenth century. The principal settlement was Pondichery; in Bengal Chandernagar had been occupied in 1690. The War of the Spanish Succession and the death of Martin, the founder of the first French settlements in India (1706), brought the Company to a state of decadence. In 1719 the Company was amalgamated with another French Company formed in 1717 and to this united body was entrusted the whole of the French colonial trade. An active and coherent policy was now followed, and the position of the Company improved. Masulipatam, Calicut, Mahe,

and Yanam were occupied between 1721 and 1723. A fort was built at Mahe in 1724 and Karikal was occupied in 1739.

Territorial ambition

As early as 1689 the English East India Company announced its 'determination to guard its commercial supremacy on the basis of its territorial supremacy'. It declared: 'The increase of our revenue is the subject of our care as much as our trade; it must maintain our force when twenty accidents may interrupt our trade; it must make us a nation in India'. This stress on territorial power 'foreshadowed the annexations' of the eighteenth century. But this ambitious project was not pursued till the disintegration of the Mughal Empire, the rise of principalities engaged in constant strife, and their political and military weakness encouraged colonial aims.

The territorial acquisitions of the French Company in the third and fourth decades of the eighteenth century were intended to further commercial objects only. Factories were fortified for motives of security, and troops were enlisted only for purposes of police. 'In 1664 perhaps Louis XIV and Colbert dreamt of securing conquests in the Indies, but in 1730 none of the Company's servants dreamt of supplying funds for trade out of the regular revenues of territorial possessions or conceived the idea of obtaining them by interfering in the lawless conflicts that arose out of the decadence of the Mughal Empire, or attempted to interfere in any persistent, methodical way in the affairs of native princes'. This notion began to develop in the early forties in the brain of Dupleix who became governor of Pondichery in 1742. He was 'one of those superior minds whose insight clarifies the issues of politics and whose activity often determines them'.

First Karnatak War (1746-48)

In the early forties the political situation in Karnatak was chaotic and uncertain as a result of expeditions led by the Marathas and Nizam-ul-Mulk. The latter made Anwaruddin Nawab of Arcot; but his position was insecure and his chief potential rival was Chanda Sahib, the son-in-law of the previous Nawab Dost Ali.

The War of the Austrian Succession broke out in Europe in 1740. England did not formally join it till 1744, but she was engaged in informal hostilities with France earlier. The news of the outbreak of war in Europe arrived in India late in 1742.

Dupleix approached the three English Presidencies for a convention of neutrality between the two Companies. The English reply was favourable, but it contained the warning that the Company would have no control over any King's ships that might arrive. Then the news came that English ships under Barnett had captured the French Company's China fleet. Realizing that neutrality was ruled out and the issue was to be decided on the sea, Dupleix called on La Bourdonnais, the gifted governor of Mauritius, to come to the rescue. With a number of French ships from Port Louis La Bourdonnais arrived at the Coromandel coast where he found the English fleet under Barnett's incompetent successor Peyton. An indecisive engagement (June 1746) took place; Peyton eventually sailed for safety to the Hughli. La Bourdonnais occupied Madras (September 1746); but he left as a result of disputes with Dupleix about the disposal of the occupied city and was later imprisoned in France on the basis of Dupleix's charges. Dupleix tried in vain to capture Fort St. David at Cuddalore because the English had gained the command of the sea after the departure of La Bourdonnais. In 1748 a fleet under Boscawen came from England in order to avenge the capture of Madras. An attempt to occupy Pondichery failed. 'It was a conspicuous success for Dupleix, and a conscious failure for the English'. Soon afterwards news arrived that peace had been made in Europe (treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, 1748). Madras was handed back to the English.

The War of the Austrian Succession and its offshoot—the First Karnatak War—made no ostensible change in the political situation in South India, but their indirect consequences were of far-reaching importance. The position of the English was improved; they now held Madras under the terms of a European treaty, and they soon obtained release from the payment of the stipulated annual quit-rent to the local ruler. Their territorial position was placed on firm foundations. The French were strengthened in two respects. They prevented Anwaruddin from interfering with their occupation of Madras and in these operations they demonstrated their military skill which earned for them a high reputation. Moreover, some detachments of the fleet which La Bourdonnais left behind him augmented the forces at the disposal of Dupleix. In the contest between the French and Anwaruddin's army the superiority of European methods of war over those followed by Indian armies was clearly

proved. 'Musketry and field artillery had developed so far that cavalry could make no impression on troops that kept their ranks and reserved their fire. The terror of Asiatic armies had disappeared'. This military lesson changed the course of Indian history. For the first time the European traders entered the political world and fought their own battles without effective interference from the regional ruler. 'It revealed the political decay that had eaten into the Indian State system'. It was proved that in any future contest between the English and the French sea power would be the decisive factor.

Dupleix

Dupleix grasped the meaning of these startling developments. The impression which he made on his close associates is thus described by Ananda Ranga Pillai who was for many years his *dubash* or secretary: 'His method of doing things is not known to any one, because none else is possessed of the quick mind with which he is gifted. In patience he has no equal. He has peculiar skill in carrying out his plans and designs in the management of affairs and in governing; in fitting his advice to times and persons; in maintaining at all times an even countenance; in doing things through proper agents; in addressing them through appropriate terms; and in assuming a bearing at once dignified towards all'.

Despite these qualities the character of Dupleix was weakened by two serious defects. He took an over-optimistic view of things and exaggerated the chances of success. Confident of his own abilities and autocratic by temperament, he found it difficult to work with others in a co-operative spirit. His experience was diplomatic and political rather than military, and he often sought to achieve his objects through artifice and intelligent manipulation of events. There is, however, no denying the fact that he was gifted with statesmanship and political vision as also a remarkable capacity for formulating long-range plans.

Second Karnatak War (1749-54)

The experience of 1746-48 exposed both the English and the French to the temptation of interfering in the political troubles of the Indian princes. The English made the first move. In 1749 they secured Devikottai (at the mouth of the Coleroon) in course of their intervention in a dispute regarding succession to the principality of Tanjore. It was an indirect reply to the occupation of Karikal by the French in 1739. The fertile ima-

gination and aggressive ambition of Dupleix led him to a far bigger adventure.

Nizam-ul-Mulk died in 1748. His second son Nasir Jang seized power and assumed the title of *subahdar* of the Deccan, but his claim was contested by his nephew (sister's son) Muzaffar Jang who claimed that his grandfather had nominated him his successor by a will. About the same time Chanda Sahib, the son-in-law of Dost Ali, a displaced and deceased Nawab of Arcot, was released from imprisonment by the Marathas. He raised a large force, contested Anwaruddin's claim to the throne of Arcot, and joined Muzaffar Jang. The two claimants made a common cause. Here Dupleix found his opportunity. Hoping that by placing them on their respective thrones he would use them as dependent rulers and convert them into instruments for the establishment of French political ascendancy in the Deccan and on the Coromandel coast, he extended to them French military aid.

Dupleix and his allies won the first round. Anwaruddin was defeated and killed at the battle of Ambur, near Vellore, in August 1749. Muzaffar Jang and Chanda Sahib granted to the French some villages adjoining Pondichery, the province of Maussipatam and the island of Divy. To this move the indirect English reply was the occupation of St. Thome, near Madras. Whether the place belonged to Chanda Sahib or to Anwaruddin's son Muhammad Ali, was a disputed point. After the battle of Ambur Muhammad Ali took refuge at Trichinopoly where he started preparing himself for hostilities against Chanda Sahib and his allies. The English began to send him help (October 1749), thereby committing themselves directly in the struggle. Dupleix sent troops to Trichinopoly (November 1749); but they made a diversion to attack Tanjore where they expected a large tribute.

The tide now turned temporarily against the French. Nasir Jang, who had so far thought that the contest for the throne of Arcot did not affect his interest, was alarmed by the progress of French arms. Prompted by the English, he appeared on the borders of Karnatak at the beginning of 1750, made Muzaffar Jang a prisoner, and retired to Arcot. The French and Chanda Sahib had to raise the siege of Tanjore. But the French general Bussy captured the strong fortress of Jinji (September 1750), and three months later Nasir Jang was killed in a surprise attack. Muzaffar Jang was proclaimed *subahdar*. Chanda Sahib and

Dupleix embraced 'like two friends, escaped from shipwreck (December 1750). To the grants already made to the French Muzaffar Jang added Nizampatam, and Dupleix was recognized through a vague title as the ruler of the territory south of the Krishna.

With a view to consolidating Muzaffar Jang's position Dupleix sent his best officer Bussy with a French force to Hyderabad (January 1751). A few weeks later (February 1751) Muzaffar Jang lost his life in a melee; but Bussy promptly recognized Salabat Jang, one of Nizam-ul-Mulk's surviving sons, as *subahdar* of the Deccan. The French general was a 'born diplomatist' and a strong man of action. He provided for Salabat Jang the support of French troops which he needed to establish his power. Dupleix outlined a grand design of pushing the French political influence into North India by placing Salabat Jang at the head of the *subah* of Bengal. But the execution of the project was interrupted by the hostility of the Marathas and the appearance of Ghaziuddin, the eldest son of Nizam-ul-Mulk, who had hitherto remained in Delhi, as a claimant to his father's throne. He expected support from Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao. The situation was saved for the French by the sudden death of Ghaziuddin and Bussy's agreement with the Peshwa at Bhalki (November 1752). Bussy consolidated his position at the court of Hyderabad and secured for himself a personal grant of four *sarkars* (the 'Northern *Sarkars*')—Mustafanagar, Ellore, Rajahmundry, Chicacole—which would provide him with an income of 31 *lakhs* for payment of his troops. Thus he ceased to be a dependent on the Hyderabad ministers for supply of funds and resorted to a legal fiction that the grants were not made to the French Company. The English tried to undo the effects of these grants by supporting the opposition of the local princes to French control. Bussy arrived at Bezvada (July 1754) to deal with their resistance. There he heard of the arrival of Godehu at Pondichery.

During these three years (1751-54) events had been moving fast in Karnatak. In 1751 the English, led by Saunders, the new energetic Governor of Madras, advised Muhammad Ali against any compromise and prepared themselves for military operations. An English force arrived at Trichinopoly to support Muhammad Ali. A French force followed. 'Then began a long, fatiguing, and uncommonly monotonous war for the possession of that town, before which the French wasted their strength'.

At this stage Robert Clive, a 'writer' or civilian officer of the English Company, emerges into history. He made a successful diversion by his bold seizure of Arcot and its strenuous defence (August-October 1751). Muhammad Ali's position was strengthened by alliances with the rulers of Mysore and Tanjore and the Maratha chief Murar Rao Ghorpade of Gooty. Unable to take Trichinopoly, the French took refuge in the island of Srirangam; but they had to surrender (June 1752). Chanda Sahib was executed by Muhammad Ali; the commander of the English forces, Stringer Lawrence, refused to interfere.

Even in this crisis Dupleix refused to admit defeat; for more than a year he found military and diplomatic means of counteracting the English success. But the situation compelled him to open negotiations for peace (January 1754). His career was suddenly cut off by his recall which meant the reversal of his policy. The authorities in Paris sent out a Director of the Company, Godehu, to supersede him as governor of Pondichery. After Godehu's arrival (August 1754) peace was made (January 1755). It was declared that both Companies should give up interference in the disputes of the Indian princes. The French retained their territorial possessions as also their special position at Hyderabad.

Failure of Dupleix

There are different views on the impact of the peace terms of 1755 on the fortunes of the English and the French. Dupleix himself declared that Godehu signed away 'the ruin of the country and the dishonour of the nation' even though French affairs had taken a turn for the better at the time of his arrival. Godehu repudiated this charge by saying that 'on his arrival (he found) the greatest confusion, the army clamouring for pay, and the treasury empty'. As it would be folly to continue the war he accepted such terms as were available. On the other hand, some contemporary English observers described the peace as 'a masterly stroke of French politics'; it tied the hands of the English and left the French free to 'recommence war with double strength'.

As the peace terms were not ratified by the Paris authorities as a result of the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, these were not fully implemented. For instance, in spite of the clause against interference in Indian politics the French position at Hyderabad was left undisturbed. However, the arrangement undoubtedly meant the failure of the plan of Dupleix to control

Karnatak even though the future of Hyderabad remained more or less undecided. Again, the English position was strengthened by virtue of the position secured by Muhammad Ali, and they succeeded in establishing their military reputation at the cost of the French. From a long-term point of view there is some truth in the view that 'Dupleix was no dreamer and his plans were never chimerical; the English adopted them; they were his disciples'. Elphinstone says: 'We look with admiration on the founder of the European ascendancy in India, to whose genius the mighty forces which are now working in Asia owe their being; the first who made an extensive use of disciplined sepoys; the first who quitted the ports on the sea and marched an army into the heart of the continent; the first, above all, who discovered the illusion of the Mughal greatness, and turned to his own purposes the phantom'.

'It was the outbreak of hostilities in 1756, and not Godehu's treaty, which ruined the French settlements in India'. The establishment of the British power in Bengal, following the battle of Plassey (1757), was another vital political development which nobody could anticipate in the time of Dupleix. The virtual elimination of the French as a political power from India, and the final collapse of the dream of Dupleix, were intimately connected with global changes in the balance of power.

Yet the failure of Dupleix to reach the goal which he laid down for himself is beyond doubt. For this he himself was largely responsible. It is generally said that he was weakened by lack of support from Paris. But he deserved little support because he took up the cause of Chanda Sahib and Muzaffar Jang without consulting the Company and then assured it that the expenses of the war would not interfere with the investment for trade. Not unnaturally the Company sent no money, and finance became a serious stumbling-block for him. War meant large additional expenditure; instead of enriching the treasury as the Maratha wars did, his wars—particularly his reverses—prevented the collection of revenues. 'Dupleix lacked the financial resources to sustain a long campaign and satisfy his allies'. This difficulty was aggravated by his wrong assessment of the policy of his English opponents. Curiously enough, he believed that they would not support Muhammad Ali whom he looked upon as a rebel, and he showed an unaccommodating spirit in his relations with them. Among other points explaining his failure is the absence among his military lieutenants (apart from Bussy

who operated in the Deccan after his capture of Jinji in 1750) of gifted officers like Stringer Lawrence and Robert Clive. Moreover, he was often handicapped by disputes among his Indian allies.

Again, although Bussy secured for the French 'unrivalled glory and almost incredible territorial possessions in the Deccan', it was a grave mistake on the part of Dupleix to divide his forces in two zones, i.e., Karnatak and the Deccan. He did not possess adequate resources for pursuing two objects at once.

Third Karnatak War (1756-63)

Neither the English nor the French accepted the settlement of 1755 as a permanent arrangement. The former devised means of driving out Bussy from Hyderabad; the latter threatened Trichinopoly.

The Seven Years' War broke out in Europe in 1756; although the diplomatic alignment had changed after 1748, England and France were again on opposite sides; and the war was necessarily extended to India. Clive was sent from Madras to Bengal to meet the threat from Nawab Sirajuddaula; his victory at Plassey (June 1757) established on the throne of Bengal a Nawab (Mir Jafar) who was completely under English influence. This was the system which Dupleix had in view in respect of Karnatak and the Deccan, and which Bussy had succeeded in establishing in the Deccan. The English success in Bengal (which included the capture of French Chandernagar in 1757) had an adverse impact on the French influence at Hyderabad: pro-French ministers were murdered. The crisis was precipitated by the recall of Bussy by Lally (June 1758). Sent by the King of France to India to drive the English out, Lally occupied Fort St David and prepared to attack Madras. Thinking that this enterprise required the mobilisation of all French forces, he directed Bussy to join him with his detachment. Bussy obeyed. At the same time practically all French forces in the 'Northern Sarkars' were withdrawn. These extremely unwise military measures on the part of Lally synchronized with the establishment of English command of the sea. The French admiral D'Ache, twice defeated by the British fleet under Pocock, left the Coromandel coast for Mauritius against Lally's opinion.

After an unsuccessful raid on Tanjore Lally besieged Madras (October 1758-March 1759); but the English, led by Pigot, Governor of Madras, and Colonel Stringer Lawrence, offered resolute defence, and the French had to withdraw. It

was a severe check to French arms and a great blow at Lally's military reputation. Had the English failed at Madras their work under Clive in Bengal would have been imperilled. The English then gained important successes in the 'Northern Sarkars'. Colonel Forde defeated the French at Kondur near Rajahmundry (December 1758), captured Masulipatam from them (April 1759) and concluded a treaty with Salabat Jang who had advanced to support his ally. D'Ache reappeared on the Coromandel coast, and after an unsuccessful engagement with the English fleet (September 1759), sailed away, never to return.

The final engagements followed in 1760-61. As Stringer Lawrence was too old and worn to take the field, Eyre Coote took over the command of the English forces. He inflicted a crushing defeat on Lally at the battle of Wandiwash (January 1760); Bussy was taken prisoner. Pondichery surrendered after a blockade of eight months (January 1761). Meanwhile Monson had taken over the command from Eyre Coote. Karikal had already fallen; Jinji and Mahe were occupied. By April 1761 not a single place remained to the French in India.

Formal peace was made two years later. Pondichery and the other settlements were restored to the French by the treaty of Paris (1763), but they were to remain dismantled and defenceless. The French returned, 'with their trade annihilated, with their influence gone, with the curse of their defeat and failure stamped upon their habitations'. By that time the English had consolidated their hold on Bengal. Mir Kasim was overthrown in the middle of 1763; the issue was finally decided at Buxar in October 1764. By 1765 the English Company was the ruler of Bengal and Bihar, protector of the puppet Emperor Shah Alam, and over-powerful ally of Shujaudaula, Nawab of Oudh. At Arcot Muhammad Ali became a subordinate ally of the English Company. His principality was incorporated in its dominions in 1801. Salabat Jang was replaced, and then put to death, by his brother Nizam Ali who finally submitted to British suzerainty in 1798. From time to time the French made half-hearted attempts to recover their political power in India, but they were never a real threat to the English. The defeat of Lally, leading to his trial for treason and execution in France, was symbolic of the collapse of the dream of Dupleix.

Causes of French failure

As in the case of Dupleix, so in the case of Lally, failure was due partly to personal character. Lally was hasty, violent,

rude, and out of touch with the local population. Like Dupleix, he was incapable of working smoothly with his colleagues. His blunders were aggravated in some cases by orders from Paris. But he could not have saved the French power in India even if he had been tactful, moderate and cautious. Victory depended on control of the sea which had passed on to the English. Dupleix and Bussy won their successes during an interval of peace between England and France when the English navy did not interfere with the arrival of French munitions and reinforcements in India. England and France were at war when Lally took charge of French operations in India. The English could, but the French could not, receive munitions and reinforcements from Europe. Mauritius, with its excellent harbour, was not really helpful, for it was remote from the base of the war in Karnatak. The English had an additional advantage: they could bring food, money and men by the sea from Bengal where their ascendancy was not threatened after Plassey. Apart from lack of sea-power, Lally was handicapped by the lack of funds. He had inadequate means of meeting the expenses of war; revenues could not be collected in plenty in war-ravaged Karnatak, and Hyderabad had never been able to remit money to Pondichery. Here, again, the English had a decided superiority: they had large resources at their disposal in Bengal.

Two basic defects of the French Company prepared the ground for the final collapse. From its very inception it was subject to excessive Government control. After 1723 all its higher officials were nominated by the Crown. Fixed dividends were paid to the share-holders, irrespective of the profit or loss of the trade with India. This arrangement killed their interest in the Company's affairs. They held no meeting for twenty years after 1725. The result was that the real control over the Company passed into the hands of the King's commissaries. The Government, however, could not pay much attention to the Company's affairs; European wars kept it engaged in complicated and vitally important issues. The want of enterprise which characterised the government of Louis XV (1715-74) affected the Company. The English Company, practically free from State control, was managed by its shareholders through elected Directors; moreover, it had the support of a strong and wealthy trading class, which the French Company lacked.

The financial position of the French Company was deteriorating even before the commencement of the struggle with the

English. During the period 1736-56 the trade of the English was four times in value as much as that of the French. During the period of the struggle very few ships left for France with cargoes from India, and after 1751 there was a precipitate decline in the French trade. The English, on the other hand, carried on a flourishing trade even during the war. They also made their conquests pay, but the wars of the French were never self-supporting. England's greater prosperity in her trade with India played no mean role in her victory over the French in the field of war.

2. PLASSEY

Calcutta

The search for a new settlement which would be free from the constant interference of the Mughal officials and could be fortified led Job Charnock, a senior servant of the English East India Company, to Sutanuti, a marshy village on the left bank of the Hughli, on 24 August 1690. It was the foundation day of the city of Calcutta. Its development was phenomenal. Initially it comprised three villages: Sutanuti, Kalikata, Govindpur. Over these villages the Company acquired *zamindari* rights in 1698. Already foundations of the fortifications which developed into Fort William, named after King William III, had been laid (1697). Calcutta became the seat of a 'Presidency' (independent of Madras) in 1700. As early as 1704 it had a population of 15,000; the number rose to over one *lakh* by 1750. It attracted Portuguese, Armenian, Persian and Hindu merchants 'who carried on their commerce under the protection of the English flag'. A Muslim historian says: 'The mild and equitable conduct of the English in their settlement gained them the confidence and esteem of the natives; which, joined to the consideration of the privileges and immunities which the Company enjoyed, induced numbers to remove thither with their families; so that in a short time Calcutta became an extensive and populous city'.

At Calcutta the English, like other *zamindars*, realized rent, acted as police magistrate, and held courts to decide petty criminal cases and civil disputes. A judicial system was organized under George I's Charter of 1726 which also provided for the appointment of a mayor, sheriff and aldermen.

English trade

The English enjoyed exemption from trade duties by pay-

ing in lieu of these a small sum of Rs. 3,000 a year on the strength of an order issued by prince Shah Shuja as *subahdar* of Bengal in 1656. This arrangement was very unsatisfactory for the Mughal Government, particularly because the Company's trade was now far more prosperous than it had been in the mid-seventeenth century. Murshid Kuli Khan, the first independent Nawab of Bengal, wanted the English to pay customs duties like other merchants. But they increased their military establishments, considering these to be 'the most convincing argument to support their privileges'. The construction of Fort William was finished in 1716. In 1718 the Nawab asked them not to strengthen their fortifications at Calcutta. He realized the importance of external trade and encouraged foreign merchants, but he sought to put all of them on an equal footing.

Hoping to secure imperial confirmation of their commercial privileges the English sent a mission to Delhi after the accession of Farrukh-siyar. Its leader was John Surman. After protracted negotiations for three years (1714-17) he secured three *farmans* addressed to the officials of Hyderabad, Gujarat and Bengal, the three Mughal *subahs* in which there were English settlements. So far as Bengal was concerned, the right of the English to trade free of all dues, subject to the customary payment of Rs. 3,000 per year, was confirmed. They were permitted to purchase from the local *zamindars* the *talukdari* right in 38 villages adjacent to Calcutta. The *farman* became ineffective in respect of this grant because Murshid Kuli Khan was 'jealous of such a privilege of settlement bestowed on foreigners'. Possession of some villages was secured in an indirect manner, but the entire area did not come under British control until Clive's treaty with Sirajuddaula in 1757.

The question of customs duties remained unsettled, and in 1735 the English admitted that Nawab Shujauddin was 'too absolute to regard any orders from (the imperial) court in their favour'. They had to secure 'the currency of their trade' by making presents to the Nawab and his officers. Alivardi Khan exercised some control on the English traders. He 'compared the Europeans to a hive of bees of whose honey you might reap the benefit, but if you disturbed their hive they would sting you to death'.

Alivardi's reign synchronized with the two Karnatak Wars and he was not slow to recognize their implications from the

Indian princes' point of view. Jean Law, a contemporary French officer, says: 'He saw with equal indignation and surprise the progress of the French and the English nations on the Coromandel coast as well as in the Deccan ... He feared that sooner or later the Europeans would attempt similar enterprises in his government'. As a matter of fact Dupleix planned in 1751 to place Salabat Jang at the head of the Bengal *subah* although Alivardi did not know it. As a precaution against the projection of the Anglo-French struggle into Bengal he opposed the attempts of both Companies to strengthen their fortifications at their principal settlements in this province: Calcutta and Chandernagar. Towards the close of his reign (1755-56) the English began to repair and strengthen their fortifications at Calcutta. They had already dug the 'Maratha Ditch' on the north-east of Calcutta (1743) for protection of the city against the Maratha invaders.

Sirajuddaula (1756-57)

Alivardi was succeeded by his grandson (daughter's son) Sirajuddaula, a young man of twenty-three. Uneducated for his kingly duties, left free to lead a riotous life, he was too reckless and cowardly to face the problems which his elevation to the throne brought him. According to his well-wisher Jean Law, 'he had distinguished himself not only by all sorts of debaucheries, but by a revolting cruelty ... Every one trembled at the name of Sirajuddaula'.

Siraj had a rival for the throne: his cousin Shaukat Jang, Nawab of Purnea. His 'greatest enemy' was his maternal aunt, Ghasiti Begam, a childless widow. His 'most formidable enemy' was Mir Jafar Ali Khan, the commander-in-chief and sister's husband of Alivardi. Thus at his accession the new Nawab faced a divided family, a hostile party in the army, and an alarmed subject population. He took two precautionary measures: Ghasiti Begam was robbed of her wealth, and Mir Jafar was replaced in the headship of the army by Mir Madan. Administrative changes followed. A Kashmiri officer named Mohan Lal was raised to high office and allowed to 'exercise a degree of influence which turned him in effect into the prime minister'.

In May 1756 Siraj started for Purnea to deal with the rebellious Shaukat Jang, but he retreated from Rajmahal on receipt of news of the defiant attitude of the English at Calcutta. Calcutta was attacked and taken (June 1756). Then followed an effective expedition against Purnea. Shaukat Jang was defeated

and killed at the battle of Manihari (October 1756). Siraj was now at the zenith of his fortune. He received an imperial *farman* confirming him in the *subahdari* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.

Rupture with the English

Sirajuddaula's rupture with the English was not really due to comparatively trivial causes such as the refusal of Roger Drake to congratulate him on his accession with suitable presents and his non-admission to the country house of the English near Kasimbazar which he wished to visit. The clue to the crisis lies in the Company's desire to improve its position and enhance its influence in Bengal. The probability of a revolution in the government of Bengal was contemplated by an English officer even during Alivardi's lifetime. The renewal of the Anglo-French War in Karnatak made it necessary for the English to make a bid for a firmer foothold in Bengal which was an important source of supply for their army. The presence of the French at Chandernagar—close to Calcutta—called for improvement of the defences of Fort William. Alivardi was apprehensive towards the close of his reign, and according to a contemporary account, he warned his successor against the dangers of European aggression. In any case Siraj felt that 'the English had taken advantage of Alivardi's illness to strengthen their military position, and that he had better check them before they became dangerous'.

This idea, says Dodwell, 'was ludicrously false'. He adds: 'So far from being prepared to disturb the peace of Bengal, the place (Calcutta) was not even capable of defence'. Drake's letter explaining the recent additions to the defences of Calcutta 'has not been preserved in any form', and their exact nature and purpose cannot be ascertained. Apparently the English had something to hide, for a person sent by Siraj to look at things in Calcutta was summarily expelled. The English had repaired their long-dilapidated defences on the river side, cleaned the half-choked 'Maratha Ditch', and thrown up earth-works in the north. All this—even if intended as protective measures against the French—was a clear violation of the terms under which the English carried on their trade. 'As regards fortifications, it is quite clear that they had exceeded their rights'. Even if they had no hostile intention against the Nawab, he could not allow them to convert Bengal into a zone of Anglo-French hostilities. The French also received orders to desist from strengthening

their fortifications at Chandernagar. There was no discriminatory prohibition applicable to the English only.

Apart from the fortifications, Siraj had serious complaints about the abuse of the Company's commercial privileges. The English were charged with having 'abused the privilege of their *dastaks* by granting them to such as were not entitled to them' and thereby causing loss to the Nawab's customs revenues. A *dastak* was a permit authorizing transit of goods. Under Farrukhsiyar's *farman* of 1717 a *dastak* given by the chief of an English factory exempted the goods covered by it from payment of customs duties. Only the goods belonging to the Company were entitled to be protected by *dastaks*; but in practice *dastaks* were issued also in favour of goods belonging to the Company's *servants* who carried on private trade to increase their personal income. By escaping the payment of customs duties in this illegal manner the Company's servants defrauded the Nawab of his revenues. Moreover, under the *farman* it was permissible to issue *dastaks* for exports and imports only, i.e., the immunity from payment of duties was restricted to foreign trade. But in practice *dastaks* were used for inland trade as well, i.e., these were used in favour of commodities purchased and sold within the country. This also meant loss of customs revenue for the Nawab's treasury.

These were old complaints. Shujauddin had complained of the 'abominable practices' of the English merchants and tried to control them. Alivardi had the same trouble. Even the Company's Court of Directors took notice of the matter. In 1755 they asked the Calcutta Council 'to be extremely careful to prevent all abuses of the *dastaks*'. Holwell, an officer of the Company, wrote to the Court of Directors in 1756 that he was not surprised at the abuse of *dastaks* being treated by Siraj-uddaula as a cause of complaint.

There was a third complaint relating to the arrest of a fugitive harboured at Calcutta. Raj Ballav, deputy of the governor of Dacca, was the chief agent of Ghasiti Begam's affairs. Siraj charged him with having embezzled public money. He was thrown into confinement and orders were issued for attachment of his property and family. His son Krishna Ballav escaped to Calcutta (March 1756) with the women and treasures of the family. Drake was bribed to give him an asylum. Siraj naturally objected to protection being given to one of his subjects who was 'liable to be called into account'. He demanded

the surrender of the fugitive, but the person who carried his letter was expelled from Calcutta. Becher, an officer of the Company, wrote that 'it was an affront that could not be expected any prince would put up with from a set of merchants'.

Capture of Calcutta (1756)

Siraj had reasonable grounds to seek a settlement of accounts with the English. Under his orders the Kasimbazar factory was invested, occupied and looted (May 1756). He personally led an attack on Calcutta, and after some resistance the city fell (20 June 1756). Governor Drake and several other officers 'disgracefully deserted' the city when its fall seemed imminent; they escaped to Falta. Holwell and a number of Europeans surrendered. All these prisoners were crowded in a chamber 18 feet by 14 feet 10 inches, with only one window, throughout the hot night of June. According to Holwell, they numbered about 165 or 170, and the next morning 'only about 16' came out alive, 'the rest being suffocated to death'.

Holwell's account of the 'Black Hole tragedy' remained current for about two centuries. The modern view is that the number of prisoners who died was 'probably only sixty'. Siraj was not personally responsible for the consequence of the confinement of the prisoners which was arranged by his officers.

English recovery of Calcutta (1757)

The news of the disaster at Calcutta reached Madras in August 1756. As military operations in Bengal were difficult in unhealthy monsoon months, an expedition was sent from Madras in October 1756. It was a large expedition under the command of Robert Clive, who had distinguished himself in the Karnatak War; with him was associated Admiral Watson. Reaching the Hughli in December, and joined by Kilpatrick who had arrived at Falta from Madras in August, Clive marched up the eastern bank of the river. Budge Budge was occupied, Calcutta was recovered (2 January 1757), and Hughli was plundered. Clive formed a fortified camp near Baranagar on the north of Calcutta. Siraj reached Calcutta (3 February 1757) *via* Hughli and encamped in the northern suburb. Clive made a surprise attack in which the Nawab's losses far exceeded those of the English. Four days later (9 February 1757) the treaty of Alinagar was signed.

The English made considerable gains by the treaty. Siraj recognized their privileges, granted them permission to fortify Calcutta and to coin *siccas*, and promised compensation for

what had been plundered at Calcutta by his troops. Not unnaturally Clive described these terms as both 'honourable and advantageous for the Company'. Despite his overwhelming numerical superiority Siraj was unable to continue the hostilities, for he was not sure of the support of many of his officers, and it was apprehended that Ahmad Shah Abdali might advance towards Bihar and Bengal. For the English the treaty 'came at a timely moment', for the Seven Years' War had broken out and they were not strong enough to fight the Nawab and the French together in Bengal.

English capture of Chandernagar (1757)

Fortunately for the English, all the French forces were fully engaged in Karnatak and Chandernagar could expect no reinforcement. They considered it necessary to crush the French power in Bengal, not only to further their general interest in the Anglo-French struggle, but also to deprive Siraj of his only natural ally. He was unable to make a firm decision. He was afraid of the French who, he thought, might reduce him to a puppet as they had done in case of the Nizam. He also feared the English who, he thought, might attack him if he openly stood by the French. Taking advantage of his oscillation between two conflicting suspicions, Clive attacked and occupied Chandernagar (March 1757). By the terms of peace the French lost their military power and even independence in Bengal, and the English were left without a rival in the province. Clive rightly claimed that the loss of Chandernagar was an 'unexpressible blow to the French Company'. It was also a decisive blow to Siraj, for it destroyed the chances of a Franco-Muslim alliance against the English in Bengal. 'Nothing can excuse his folly in allowing their destruction'.

Conspiracy of 1757

After the fall of Chandernagar Siraj lost control over events and adopted a course of conduct which could not have been feebler or more unwise. He yielded to the English demand for expulsion of all Frenchmen from his dominions, including the French refugees at Kasimbazar under the command of his sincere well-wisher Jean Law. Yet he proceeded to write to Bussy to come to his help from the Deccan. He openly expressed his hostile feelings against the English. Yet he courted their good will as the only safeguard against the apprehended advance of Ahmad Shah Abdali towards Bihar and Bengal. This danger passed away on Abdali's retirement from Delhi (April 1757).

These vacillations on the part of Siraj led the English to think that the complete elimination of the French from Bengal was not enough ; it was necessary to replace him by a new Nawab whom they could more easily control. Their position was still insecure, for a strong force from the Deccan under a general of Bussy's capacity might invade Bengal to restore the French power.

The English were not alone in thinking of installing a new Nawab at Murshidabad. Some prominent persons at the court, guided principally by self-interest, desired a change in government. Among them were Mir Jafar, Rai Durlabhram, Omichand and Jagat Seth. Mir Jafar had never been sincerely loyal to Alivardi to whom he owed his prominence. Siraj dismissed him with insult. Rai Durlabhram, who had held the office of *dewan*, was placed by Siraj in a position subordinate to that of Mohan Lal. The Seths, who had contributed largely to Alivardi's rise to power, were alienated by his successor's insulting treatment. Omichand communicated to the English the first hint of intrigues against the Nawab. There is no doubt that Siraj acted very unwisely in offending powerful dignitaries ; but according to Watts, who was then at Murshidabad and took a very active part in the pre-Plassey transactions, 'the only oracle that every man (in the Nawab's court) consulted was his own interest'. From the point of view of the conspirators there was nothing wrong or unusual in repeating what Alivardi had done in 1740. If Mir Jafar was a traitor, he was following the example of his master Alivardi. The only new factor in 1756 was the participation of a foreign power, i.e., the English. The conspirators lacked the political wisdom and foresight to grasp its significance ; the fate of the successors of Nizam-ul-Mulk had no lesson for them.

The English were encouraged by the court conspirators' promises of co-operation. They were fully aware of the weakness of the Nawab's position: 'he was universally hated by all sorts and degrees of men'; 'the affection of the army was alienated from him by his ill-usage of the officers'; and 'a revolution was generally wished for'. They felt that an attempt to overthrow Siraj would be made—probably successfully—even if they kept aloof. They thought that 'it would be a great error in politics to remain idle and unconcerned spectators of an event' which, if they promoted it, might effectively counteract the designs of the French and 'possibly keep them entirely out of these dominions'.

Negotiations between the conspirators (April-May 1757) and the English were carried on with secrecy and speed. Omichand and Watts, the chief of the English factory at Kasimbazar, were the principal agents. Mir Jafar was selected as the successor of Siraj. He concluded a secret treaty with the English (5 June 1757). The conditions were as follows: 'an alliance, offensive and defensive; the surrender of all French fugitives and factories; restitution of all English losses, public and private, caused by the capture of Calcutta (in 1756); the admission of all rights granted by Farrukh-siyar's *farman*; liberty to fortify the factories at Kasimbazar and Dacca; abolition of the Nawab's right to erect fortifications below Hughli; recognition of English sovereignty within the bounds of Calcutta; grant of territories for the maintenance of a proper military force by the Company; Nawab's obligation for expenses of English troops; residence at the Nawab's *darbar* of one of the Company's servants'. These terms converted the *subahdar* of Bengal into 'a mediated Indian ruler subject to British control, exactly of the type created by the subsidiary alliance system ascribed to Wellesley, with two differences: no land was politically ceded for the maintenance of a subsidiary contingent, and no ban was explicitly placed on the employment of European servants by the Nawab'.

Battle of Plassey (1757)

The English lost no time in striking at Siraj. The treaty of 5 June was delivered to the English authorities at Calcutta on 11 June. Next day Watts and his companions fled from Murshidabad. On 13 June Clive began his march from Chandernagar (then in English occupation) and reached Plassey (on the Ganges, in the Nadia district) *via* Hughli and Katwa (in the Burdwan district). Here the English army—composed of 1,100 Europeans and 200 sepoys and half-caste gunners—made contact with the Nawab's much larger army. But this numerical superiority was really a source of weakness, for about 45,000 of the Nawab's troops were under the command of three traitors: Mir Jafar, Yar Latif Khan, Rai Durlabhram.

The battle took place on 23 June. After Mir Madan's death in the field Siraj suspended the fight for the day on Mir Jafar's treacherous advice. The withdrawal caused disaster. The troops of the three traitors retreated without having fired a shot during the whole day. Clive's sharp attack broke up the Nawab's battle lines. Siraj had already fled away, and there was no commander left to conduct an orderly retreat. The English casualties

numbered 23 killed (7 Europeans, 16 sepoys) and 49 wounded (13 Europeans, 36 sepoys). On the Nawab's side about 500 men were killed and a due proportion (including Mohan Lal) wounded. All his artillery, baggage, camp equipage, stores and cattle fell into the victor's hands.

Consequences of Plassey

Sir Jadunath Sarkar says: 'On 23 June 1757 the middle ages of India ended and her modern age began ... In the space of less than one generation, in the twenty years from Plassey (1757-76), the land began to recover from the blight of medieval theocratic rule'. This is a retrospective reading of the consequences of the battle of Plassey. Luke Sraffton, who served as the Company's Resident at the Nawab's *darbar* after Plassey, wrote: 'The general idea at this time entertained by the servants of the Company was that the battle of Plassey did only restore us to the same situation we were in before the capture of Calcutta (by Sirajuddaula); the *subah* (*subahdar*) was conceived to be as independent as ever, and the English returned into their commercial character ...'. This statement ignores the fact that substantial restraints on the Nawab's independence had been imposed by Mir Jafar's pre-Plassey treaty (5 June 1757) with the English. Legally, however, the English did not become political masters of Bengal in 1757. A few years later the Supreme Court of Calcutta held that only the inhabitants of Calcutta—and not those of other English factory areas—were British subjects. Theoretically, therefore, the English retained their 'commercial character' even after Plassey.

The verdict of Plassey was confirmed by the English victory at Buxar (1764). During the intervening years the 'commercial character' of the English became predominantly political because Mir Jafar was weak in character, Clive's firmness and ingenuity pushed him into helplessness, the Marathas lost for some years their military power and political ascendancy as a result of their defeat at Panipat, and the French suffered complete shipwreck in South India. In 1757 no one could have predicted the impending misfortunes of the Marathas and the French, and the establishment of British rule in Bengal could hardly have been anticipated. 'It was the events of the next ten years which turned a paramount influence into a new regime'.

Plassey gave the English certain immediate advantages—military and commercial—and created a field for the establishment of their political influence in 'three provinces abounding

in the most valuable production of nature and art'. The exclusion of the French from Bengal strengthened their position in the South Indian struggle. Success strengthened their self-confidence. As early as 1759 Clive suggested to Pitt the Elder, the leading member of the King's Government in London, the advisability of the establishment of direct control of the Crown over the Company's possessions in Bengal.

3. BUXAR

Mir Jafar (1757-60)

On 29 June 1757 Clive, 'in the presence of all the Rajas and great men of the court (at Murshidabad), led Jafar Ali Khan by the hand to the royal seat (*masnad*), seated him on it, and saluted him as Nawab of the three *subahs*'. This was a public demonstration of the Company's assumption of the role of King-maker. A few days later Sirāj was captured and murdered.

Mir Jafar was weak, irresolute, devoid of political foresight as also administrative capacity. Embarrassed by lack of finance, he failed to satisfy the exaggerated expectations of his English collaborators and to provide regular payment for his army. He antagonized two powerful Hindus—Raja Ramnarayan, the deputy governor of Bihar, and Rai Durlabhram, the *dewan*—and threw them on Clive's protection. Internal peace and administrative stability was disturbed by a rebellion in Midnapur.

Mir Jafar had to pay enormous sums of money to the Company as also to its principal officers. The amount which fell into the Company's hands was large enough for 'carrying on the whole trade of India (China excepted) for three years together, without sending out one ounce of bullion' from England. Moreover, vast sums were remitted to England through foreign Companies which weighed in favour of the Company in the balance of trade. 'Thus ensued a serious economic drain on the resources of Bengal'. The Company established a mint at Calcutta. It also secured a grant for the *zamindari* of 24 parganas around Calcutta against the opposition of the old proprietors and tenants. Another concession to the Company was the grant of monopoly of the trade in saltpetre produced in North Bihar.

Shah Alam's invasions (1759-60)

Mir Jafar resented the English 'claims of money, territory and exemptions', but his military dependence on the Company

made him helpless. This became evident during Shah Alam's invasions as also in the war against the Dutch.

In 1759 prince Ali Gauhar (Shah Alam), supported by the army of Muhammad Kuli Khan, the imperial governor of Allahabad, made a bid for seizing Bihar. He entered Patna and invited the French officer Jean Law, then living as a refugee in Bihar, to his camp. His attempt was frustrated by Raja Ramnarayan who applied to the English at Calcutta for help. A body of Mir Jafar's troops under his son Miran and a party under Clive crossed the frontier of Bihar near Teliagarhi. A body of the Company's troops reached Patna. Muhammad Kuli Khan left Bihar to protect his own *subah* from the attack of Nawab Shujauddaula of Oudh. After the defeat of an allied *zamindar* by Miran's troops Shah Alam, friendless and resourceless, left Bihar.

In grateful recognition of Clive's services on this occasion Mir Jafar procured from the puppet Emperor Alamgir II the title of *Omrah* and conferred on him the right to enjoy the amount of revenue which was payable by the Company to the Nawab for its *zamindari* of 24 Parganas. It was a personal grant; it came to be known as 'Clive's *jagir*'. It was an irregular arrangement for rewarding Clive in his private capacity for the services rendered by him to the Nawab in his public capacity. It led to legal trouble in later years.

Towards the end of the same year (1759) Shah Alam proclaimed himself Emperor after the murder of his father Alamgir II by the *wazir* Imad-ul-Mulk and again marched into Bihar. Once again he was opposed by Raja Ramnarayan, and Clive sent a force under Major Caillaud. Although defeated by the English commander, Shah Alam advanced into Bengal with a view to making a surprise attack on the defenceless city of Murshidabad. Defeated and pursued by English forces, he retreated to Bihar and finally left that province towards the middle of 1760.

Dutch War (1759)

Towards the middle of the seventeenth century the Dutch obtained a firm footing at Chinsura, with sub-factories at Kasimbazar and Patna. In 1698 the disturbances caused by the rebellion of Rahim Khan provided for them an opportunity of fortifying their factory at Chinsura. Their trade in Bengal began to decline after 1720. But large quantities of piecegoods of Bengal continued to be exported to Batavia on the account

of the Dutch Company, and its servants carried on a lucrative trade through secret monopoly of the export of opium to Batavia.

After the expulsion of the French from Bengal before Plassey the Dutch remained the only commercial rival of the English in the province. After Mir Jafar's accession the Dutch tried to obtain a price for recognizing him as Nawab. Their trade was stopped and their agent seized. They suffered when the English, with a view to preventing French vessels from entering the Hughli, subjected all foreign vessels coming up the river to a strict search. They complained when Clive obtained for the English Company a monopoly of the saltpetre produced in North Bihar. The duties on the export of opium were raised and workmen were prevented from working for the Dutch Company. Thus pushed into diverse difficulties, the Dutch, says a British historian, had 'the same moral justification for attempting to overthrow the English supremacy as Saunders and Clive had for overthrowing that of the French in the south'.

In 1759 several Dutch vessels carrying European and Malaya troops arrived at the mouth of the Hughli. Some writers hold that Mir Jafar's dislike of Clive's domination led him to encourage the Dutch. But the Company's officers at Calcutta reported to the Court of Directors that the Dutch attempt to 'disturb the tranquillity of the province' was 'unknown' to the Nawab and 'this ill-judged step had greatly exasperated him against them'.

Under Clive's instructions Colonel Forde advanced against the Dutch and defeated them at Bidera, almost midway between Chandernagar and Hughli (25 November 1759). By a treaty made a few days later Mir Jafar permitted the Dutch to carry on their trade as before subject to two principal conditions: 'they shall never meditate war, introduce or enlist troops or raise fortifications in the country'; 'they shall be allowed to keep 125 European soldiers, and no more, for service of their factories of Chinsura, Kasimbazar and Patna'. Clive's prompt action eliminated the possibility of the Company's war in Bengal with another European power. The Dutch lost all prospects of gaining political power in Bengal, and gradually their trade ceased to be as profitable as it had been before.

Clive's retirement (1760)

Clive sailed for England in February 1760. Till 1758 he had no definite official position among the English in Bengal ;

technically he was a servant of the Governor and Council of Madras. In that year he assumed charge as Governor of Bengal.

Arriving in Bengal when Sirajuddaula was at the zenith of his fortune, Clive succeeded in three years' time (December 1756—February 1760) in 'establishing the English in a position of predominance'. The English had no legal authority or moral position in the province. Clive made himself the *de facto* controller of the affairs of the State through the skilful use of political strategy and military resources. But no system had emerged; no balance of power had been established between the Nawab and his English protectors. The greatest security for the English lay in the absence of external danger. The battle of Bidera (1759) crushed the Dutch. The battle of Wandiwash (1760) and the capitulation of Pondichery (1761) removed the French menace. The third battle of Panipat (1761) immobilised the Marathas for several years. Shah Alam was still lingering on the borders of Bihar; but his only political asset was his formal title to the imperial throne, and his material resources were inadequate for a successful invasion.

'Revolution' of 1760

After the departure of Clive the Governorship was held temporarily by Holwell for a few months. He was relieved by Henry Vansittart in July 1760.

Holwell, the author of the 'Black Hole' story, was 'a man of greater talent than character'. He did not possess Clive's strength of character and political capacity, nor could he claim the authority vested in a permanent Governor. He could not deal adequately with the current difficulties, of which the most important was the desperate financial position of the Company. Mir Jafar was unable to meet the needs of the growing army. The enormous amount exacted by the English as price for his elevation to the throne was a serious drain on his treasury. He had to incur heavy expenses in putting down the rebellions of *zamindars* and in repulsing Shah Alam's invasions. The imperfect control over some of the larger *zamindaris*—the result of weakness of the Nawab's administration—led to a fall in the collection of land-revenue. The abuses in the field of trade, caused chiefly by the illegal practices of the Company's servants, reduced the customs revenue. After Mir Jafar's fall Mir Kasim was 'amazed and thunder-struck at the emptiness of the treasury' and Vansittart found no money in the treasury, 'only gold and silver plates to the amount of two or three *lakhs*'. Unable

to settle the Company's demand in cash, Mir Jafar assigned to it some portions of the districts of Nadia and Burdwan, but the collections from these assigned lands were extremely unsatisfactory. Apart from meeting the Company's expenses in Bengal, the English at Calcutta were required to send supplies to Madras and Bombay. The Court of Directors felt that Bengal, 'a settlement abounding with industrious inhabitants and flourishing in its trade', was an inexhaustible source of wealth.

Holwell held Mir Jafar responsible for all troubles and advocated his removal from the throne. He accused him of having betrayed the English with the Dutch and with Shah Alam, failed to make the payments that he had promised to the Company, and brought the country to ruin by maladministration. In July 1760 the sudden death of Miran, Mir Jafar's eldest son, brought up the question of succession. Holwell found in the Nawab's son-in-law Mir Kasim a person who could save the situation if he was recognized as his partner in government and heir-apparent. Vansittart, a newcomer from Madras, was not well acquainted with the political situation in Bengal. He accepted Holwell's plan and allowed him to finalise arrangements with Mir Kasim. The result was the treaty of 27 September 1760 with Mir Kasim.

The chief object of the English in concluding this treaty was 'to secure a revenue proportionate to the increased military expenses, brought upon them by their connections with the Nawab'. For this purpose three districts—Burdwan, Midnapur, Chittagong—were to be ceded to the Company. The English would participate in half of the *chunam* trade of Sylhet. Mir Jafar would continue in 'the possession of his dignities', but Mir Kasim would exercise actual power as *naib subahdar*. Mir Jafar refused to accept this arrangement. He resigned when the English troops occupied his palace at Murshidabad. Mir Kasim was proclaimed Nawab. Mir Jafar left for Calcutta to live under English protection.

Vansittart justified the overthrow of Mir Jafar on the ground of his 'indolence and weakness' as also 'a general disaffection against his government among all ranks and degrees of people'. But the English did not want a strong and efficient ruler, as Mir Kasim's fate shows. The crux of the problem lay in the unworkability of the political system which had emerged after Plassey. From the standpoint of the Mughal system the Nawab, free from even the shadow of imperial control, was a

completely independent ruler. But his independence was crippled by his dependence on the armed forces of the Company as also by the increasing pressure on his financial resources in the interest of the Company and its hungry servants. The invasions of Shah Alam, the activities of the Dutch and the continuation of the Anglo-French War in South India complicated the situation. There was a fundamental divergence between the interests of the Company and those of the Nawab; it could not be removed or even adjusted by give-and-take experiments from time to time.

The 'revolution' of 1760 was really no 'revolution', even though Vansittart used that word. It involved no new principle, not even a new political approach. It was merely the replacement of one Nawab by another. In 1757 a change was brought about by fighting; in 1760 threat of force was enough. The difference in method reflected a change in the Company's position; in 1760 it was stronger than it had been in 1757. In both cases the prospective Nawab had to agree in advance to make substantial concessions to the English in order to achieve a common end, i.e., the overthrow of the existing ruler. There was no formal demarcation of the sphere of authority between the Nawab and the Company. So far as the English were concerned there were only rights and privileges divorced from responsibilities—apart from the responsibility of providing military protection for the Nawab in their own interest.

Mir Kasim (1760-63)

The first important political issue faced by Mir Kasim after his accession was the third invasion of Bihar by Shah Alam (1760-61). Defeated by Major Carnac who went to Patna as the commander of the Company's forces, the nominal Emperor was 'reduced so low as to be much more an object of pity than of fear'. Mir Kasim saw him at Patna and obtained from him formal confirmation in the office of *subahdar*.

With an exhausted exchequer, a mutinous army and a defiant landed aristocracy, Mir Kasim realized that 'it was high time for reform'. He soon made large payments to the Company and cleared a large portion of the arrears due to his army. Well versed in the exercise of executive power, he had 'natural talents' for revenue administration. He raised the rates of the land-revenue, adopted harsh measures for regular and full collection, and followed a stern policy towards the *zamindars*. He also adopted well-planned measures for the reorganization of

his army. He placed it under the command of an Armenian, Gurgin Khan, who reorganized its different branches on the European model. Several foreigners—Sumru, Gentil, Marcat, Aratoon, and others—were admitted into the Nawab's military service. The artillery was strengthened by manufacture of arms and ammunition at Monghyr (in Bihar) where Mir Kasim had established his seat of government. Vansittart testifies to his success as an administrator, and the contemporary Muslim historians enumerate his 'admirable qualifications'.

Inland trade

Mir Kasim's relations with the English were not always smooth. He was supported by Vansittart and some members of the Council at Calcutta; other members, who were opposed to Vansittart on personal grounds, 'viewed with jealous eyes every act of the Nawab's government'. It was the inland trade question which generated the crisis.

Vansittart defined inland trade as 'the trade from place to place in the country, in the articles of the produce of the country'. Before Plassey the Company's servants claimed the privilege of participating in inland trade—trade in salt, betel, tobacco, etc.—under Farrukh-siyar's *farman* of 1717. The Nawabs never conceded this privilege, but the Company's servants actually enjoyed it 'rather from convenience than of right'. The abuse assumed larger proportions after Plassey. Clive secured from Mir Jafar an 'express authorisation' for the Company's servants' participation in the internal trade free of duties. A new sense of power led them to throw to the winds all principles of propriety, and the weak government of Mir Jafar failed to impose any restraint on them. As it was extremely difficult to carry on inland trade in the face of the English traders' privilege, many indigenous traders—the Armenians, for instance—began to join them as partners. Moreover, their *gomastahs* (Indian agents) took unfair advantage of this anomalous system in different ways.

The issue had serious financial, economic and political implications. The Nawab's exchequer suffered because duties were not paid. The producers of the commodities suffered because the traders used violent methods to buy at less than reasonable prices. The Indian traders who were not associated with the English traders suffered heavy losses in unfair competition. Production suffered because the peasants, unable to secure reasonable prices for their produce, in some cases gave up the

production of salt, tobacco, etc. Politically the unlawful activities of the English traders, which sometimes provoked violent resistance from the local people, led to breakdown of law and order and constituted a menace to the Nawab's authority.

In 1762 Mir Kasim made an official protest; Vansittart made a compromise arrangement which was rejected by the Calcutta Council. The majority of the members of the Council 'allowed their material interest to colour and distort their policy'. Mir Kasim took the extraordinary step of abolishing duties altogether (March 1763) for two years. As this measure deprived the English traders of their unfair advantage, his opponents in the Calcutta Council declared that it was a 'breach of the Company's privileges'. A rash attack on Patna by Ellis, the chief of the English factory there, precipitated an armed conflict. War was formally declared against Mir Kasim in July 1763. Mir Jafar was restored to the throne.

The real cause of the war was the anomaly of the political situation. 'There could be no stability in affairs so long as the Nawab fancied himself an independent governor and the English claimed privileges wholly inconsistent with that independence'. Some historians attribute the war to Mir Kasim's 'ambitious designs' for breaking the political ascendancy of the English and establishing an independent *subahdari* for himself. There is hardly any evidence to show that he had formulated such a far-reaching political 'design'. It was the Calcutta Council's insistence on the unlawful and unjust privileges of the English traders that created a situation from which neither party found a way for retreat.

Battle of Buxar (1764)

Defeated near Katwa in the Burdwan district (9 July 1763), at Giria in the Murshidabad district (2 August 1763), and at Udhanala near Rajmahal (4-5 September 1763), Mir Kasim hastened to Monghyr and then to Patna. At Monghyr, and on the way to Patna, he cruelly put to death some prominent Indians, including Raja Ramnarayan, the two Seth brothers, Raja Rajballav and his sons, on suspicion of their complicity with the English. At Patna he caused a number of English prisoners to be murdered. Apparently repeated reverses drove him to desperation. From Patna he was chased by the English to the river Karmanasa. He crossed over and entered the territory of Nawab Shujaudaula of Oudh (December 1763).

After the third battle of Panipat Shuja found himself in

a strong position: he was an ally of Ahmad Shah Abdali, and he was free from the Maratha menace as a result of the collapse of the Maratha power in North India. The refugee Emperor, Shah Alam II, found shelter in Oudh after the failure of his third invasion of Bihar (1761). He appointed Shuja to the office of *wazir* (1762). It was an office of high dignity; but it hardly had any important functions attached to it, for the Emperor had no territory to govern. Early in 1763 Shuja made an unsuccessful attempt to escort Shah Alam to Delhi so that he could take his seat on his ancestral throne.

Neither the English nor Mir Kasim was favourably disposed towards Shuja because he was suspected of harbouring designs on the Bengal *subah*. But Mir Kasim had to seek Shuja's aid after his expulsion from Bihar (December 1763). Aid could not be expected from the Marathas, the Jats or the Rohillas. Shuja, whose territories were contiguous to Bihar, might take an interest in his affairs. Moreover, as imperial *wazir* he might help the deposed *subahdar* of a Mughal province. The Mughal Empire was practically dead, but it still commanded political and moral prestige throughout the country.

Shuja met Mir Kasim in January 1764 and finally committed himself to his cause in March 1764. It was agreed that Mir Kasim would meet the expenses of Shuja's army at the rate of 11 *lakhs* per month, cede to him the province of Bihar after his restoration to the throne of Bengal, and pay a sum of three *crores* on the successful conclusion of the expedition.

The armies of Mir Kasim and Shuja—a vast horde of 1,50,000 men—crossed the Karmanasa in April 1764. Composed of combatants of different races, with little training or discipline, and with no common interest, it was hardly an effective fighting force. Moreover, there was no real harmony of interest and purpose between Shuja, Mir Kasim and Shah Alam who accompanied the expedition. Mir Kasim sought to evade payment of the promised sums, and Shuja desired to possess himself of his wealth and property. The result was Mir Kasim's arrest by Shuja (August 1764). He escaped on the eve of the battle of Buxar and died several years later as a miserable exile (1777). Shah Alam secretly corresponded with the English.

After some military operations around Patna (May 1764) Shuja took up his residence in the fort of Buxar and spent the rainy season there. Major Carnac, who was initially in charge of the Company's force sent against Shuja, was unable to deal

with the situation satisfactorily. He was replaced by Major Hector Munro who occupied the important fortress of Rohtas (September 1764) and reached Buxar (October 1764) at the head of an army estimated at between 30,000 and 50,000. Here he inflicted complete defeat on Shuja in a pitched battle (23 October 1764). Apart from the basic defects of Shuja's army, his inefficient management of the operations in the field was responsible for his disaster.

Consequences of Buxar

The battle of Buxar was the result of Mir Kasim's alliance with Shuja and is, on that ground, linked with political developments in Bengal. But it did not affect the fortunes of Mir Kasim, for he had cut off his connection with Shuja before Munro's attack. The impact of the defeat fell exclusively on Shuja. One single blow reduced the most important and influential ruler of North India to dust. He made desperate efforts to continue fighting; but after the occupation of Benares, Chunar and Allahabad by the English (November 1764-February 1765) he was deserted by his troops. He became a fugitive, seeking aid and shelter from his hereditary foes—the Rohilla and Bangash Afghans—as also the Marathas. His two *subahs*—Oudh and Allahabad—came under effective English occupation. When all his efforts for renewal of war failed he sought security in unconditional surrender to the English (May 1765). Shah Alam had already found shelter with the English.

Buxar was a great victory for the English in the military sense. At Plassey Sirajuddaula's defeat was due chiefly to the treachery of his own generals. At Buxar the English emerged victorious without the aid of treachery in Shuja's camp. Shuja, moreover, was not a foolish and inexperienced young man like Siraj; he was a veteran in war and politics. Victory over such an enemy raised the political prestige of the Company. Its ascendancy in Bengal survived the last challenge, and the door was now open for the projection of its influence into the Oudh-Allahabad region.

Treaty of Allahabad (1765)

Clive returned to Calcutta in May 1765 as Governor of Bengal for the second time. The problem of the Company's relations with Shuja and Shah Alam awaited solution. Although the former's territories were under the occupation of the English army, annexation was ruled out. The assumption of administrative responsibility for the two *subahs* (Oudh and Alla-

habad) would be an experiment which had not yet been tried even in Bengal and was beyond the Company's capacity. Vansittart had promised Oudh to Shah Alam, but Clive knew that he would not be able to maintain himself there without English help. Shuja, on the other hand, was likely to provide a better security for Bengal's western frontier.

Clive made the final settlement through the treaty of Allahabad with Shujauddaula (16 August 1765). Shuja's old dominions were restored to him with the exception of Kora and Allahabad which were given to Shah Alam. Balwant Singh of Benares, who had assisted the English in the war, was confirmed in possession of his *zamindari* on the condition of paying Shuja the same revenue as heretofore. 'Perpetual and universal peace, sincere friendship and firm union' were established between the Company and the Nawab. In case of invasions of the dominions of either party by a third power, the other should help him with a part or the whole of his forces. If the Company's forces were employed in the Nawab's service, their extraordinary expenses were to be met by him. Nothing, however, was said about the expenses of the Nawab's troops if they were employed in the Company's service. He was required to pay a war indemnity of 50 *lakhs* and to allow the Company to trade duty-free in his dominions.

Having regard to the total collapse of Shuja's power in 1764-65 these terms must be regarded as very generous, although these contained the seeds of an arrangement which resulted in course of a few years in his complete subordination to the Company. Clive's generosity to the fallen foe was due to the realization of the fact that Bengal required a strong and stable frontier on the west. Only Shuja, put in charge of large and rich territories, was 'capable of interposing an effective barrier' between Bengal and the Marathas whose power in North India was being revived under the able guidance of Peshwa Madhav Rao I. An additional advantage was the privilege of duty-free trade in Shuja's dominions.

4. DEWANI

Puppet Nawabs

Mir Jafar made a complete surrender to the English after his restoration in July 1763. By a new treaty (10 July 1763) he confirmed Mir Kasim's arrangement about the districts ceded to the Company (Burdwan, Midnapur, Chittagong), cancelled

Mir Kasim's order regarding the total abolition of duties, restricted the levy on English trade to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, and agreed to receive a Resident of the Company at the *darbar*. The provisions relating to the military forces were significant. The total strength of the Nawab's army was not to exceed 12,000 horse and 12,000 foot. 'If there should be occasion for any more, the number shall be increased by consent of the Governor and Council proportionately to the emergency. Besides these, the forces of the English Company shall always attend' the Nawab when 'they are wanted'.

By confirming the cession of the three districts Mir Jafar crippled himself financially. By accepting the numerical limit on his forces he crippled himself militarily. The weakness of his character, accentuated by bitter political experience and a fell disease (leprosy), made it quite impossible for him to make a bid for playing an effective role in politics and administration.

The victory at Buxar and Mir Jafar's death a few months later (February 1765) completed the establishment of the Company's power in Bengal. The English selected as his successor his minor son Najmuddaula and secured his consent to a treaty (February 1765) which placed the government completely under their control. The minor Nawab undertook to appoint Muhammad Reza Khan as *naib subah(dar)* or deputy governor. He was to be entrusted with 'the chief management of all affairs'. He was not to be removed from his office without the consent of the Governor and Council. The appointment and dismissal of revenue-collectors would require the approval of the Governor and Council. The income of the ceded districts would serve 'as a fixed resource for defraying the ordinary expenses of the Company's troops'.

The Nawab's position became worse within a few months. Clive, on his return as Governor (May 1765), persuaded Najmuddaula to make over all the revenues to the Company in lieu of an annual pension of fifty *lakhs*. His policy was 'always to have it in our power to overcome the very Nawab we are bound by treaty to support'.

On Najmuddaula's death (1766) his minor brother Saifuddaula was proclaimed his successor. The new Nawab's pension was reduced by 12 *lakhs*. He signed a treaty (1766) 'agreeing that the protecting the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and the force sufficient for that purpose, be left entirely to the Company's discretion and good management'. He died in 1770.

His successor was his minor brother Mubarakuddaula who had to submit to a further cut of 10 *lakhs* in his pension. In 1775 the Supreme Court at Calcutta decided that the Nawab was not a sovereign prince; one of the Judges referred to him as 'a phantom, a man of straw'.

Shah Alam's farman (1765)

Under the Mughal system of provincial government the *dewan* was the officer in charge of the collection of revenues and the administration of civil justice, holding rank and position next to those of the *subahdar*. The question of securing the office of *dewan* for the Company was considered in 1758, 1759 and 1761; but it was thought that such addition to the Company's power would displease the Nawab and demand larger military forces than the Company possessed. After Buxar there was a complete change in the situation. Najmuddaula was converted into a helpless tool. Shujauddaula's defeat, followed by the treaty of Allahabad, removed all possibilities of external military danger. But a new difficulty was apprehended. The Company's assumption of all governmental functions—the transformation of the English into *de facto* rulers of Bengal—might alienate the French, the Dutch and the Danes. They might treat the Company's authority as illegitimate and refuse to pay to its servants the duties on their trade and the quit-rents of lands held by them. It appeared desirable to show that the Company's authority was based, not on treaties forced on helpless Nawabs, but on a really lawful grant. Such a grant could be made only by the Emperor of Delhi who, despite his political and military helplessness, had not yet lost his nominal sovereignty.

It was convenient for Clive to make use of the imperial authority because Shah Alam was a protege of the English after Buxar. As a political strategy he admitted the nominal Emperor's right of confirming the actual position secured by the Company in Bengal through its successful use of political and military weapons. Shah Alam, always in want of money, was glad to seize an opportunity for drawing through the English a large amount of tribute from Bengal.

The arrangement was finalised through an imperial *farman* issued on 12 August 1765. Shah Alam granted to the Company the *dewani* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in perpetuity, requiring it to pay 26 *lakhs* annually to the imperial exchequer. The balance of the revenues of the three provinces was to be used

for two purposes: the maintenance of 'a large army' for the purpose of defence, and the management of the *nizamat* (i.e., the maintenance of law and order and the administration of criminal justice).

Under the Mughal system the tenure of the provincial *dewan* was not permanent, and the office was always held by a single individual. In the case of the Company the tenure was permanent, and the office was to be held by a corporate body. Again, by recognizing the Company's responsibility for the defence of the provinces the *farman* extended the scope of the *dewani* to include the most important of the functions of the *nizamat*. This was a grave deviation from the Mughal system under which the *subahdar* was responsible for defence. In effect, therefore, the *farman* was 'a cession of the sovereignty of these provinces, seeing that it was a cession of all the essentials of sovereignty'.

'Double Government'

Shah Alam's *farman* brought to an end the undefined position which the Company had been holding in Bengal since 1757. It entered the Mughal imperial system and secured a position to which well-defined rights and responsibilities were attached. But its interest lay only in the enjoyment of rights; it avoided the responsibilities, and thereby created an anomalous situation.

The primary responsibility of the *dewan* under the Mughal system was the collection of revenues. The Court of Directors decided that the Company's *dewani* functions would be exercised by the Resident at the Company's *darbar* under the control of the Governor and the Select Committee, but he would simply 'superintend the collection' and receive the money from the Nawab's treasury. The appointment of officers, the management of *zamindaris*, the administration of civil justice, etc., would remain in the hands of the Nawab or his ministers. Thus the Company would control the financial resources without assuming responsibility for civil administration. Its servants would 'lie beneath the tree and let the ripe fruit tumble into their open mouths'. 'They would take the produce of the people's labour and, in return, offer the people no protection against injustice and oppression'.

Muhammad Reza Khan, who had been functioning as the *naib subah* (deputy governor) as the Company's nominee under the treaty with Najmuddaula, was appointed by Clive as *naib*

dewan (deputy *dewan*) to discharge the *dewani* functions of the Company in Bengal. An analogous position was held in Bihar by Raja Dhiraj Narayan who was replaced in 1766 by Raja Shitab Rai. Holding the two offices of *naib subah* and *naib dewan*, Reza Khan and his counterpart in Bihar were in charge of the *nizamat* as also of the *dewani*. They controlled the entire administration as agents of the Company to which they owed their appointment and which could dismiss them. It was 'a dual system in a double sense'. The authority under the Emperor was divided in theory between the Nawab (as *subahdar*) and the Company (as *dewan*). In practice the administration was divided between 'English controllers and Indian agency'. The English controllers (the Governor and the Select Committee) acted through the Resident at the Nawab's *darbar*. The head of the 'Indian agency' in Bengal was Reza Khan who, though styled *naib subah*, was in no way responsible to the puppet Nawab.

This system produced deplorable results. Verelst, who was Governor during the period 1767-69, wrote that 'divided and complicated authority gave rise to oppressions and intrigues unknown at any other period'. The consequences, he added, were evident in 'the decline of commerce and cultivation, the diminution of specie, and the general distress of the poor'. Richard Becher, Resident at the Nawab's *darbar*, wrote in 1769: '... this fine country, which flourished under the most despotic and arbitrary government, is verging towards its ruin'. For seven years (1765-72) the English maintained a system of which the dominant feature was a marked divorce between power and responsibility. It enabled them to 'suck the orange dry'.

Clive's reforms

Clive left a bad legacy to his successors in the sphere of internal administration, for he was the creator of the system of 'Double Government'. But he took two steps to remove corruption which was widespread among the Company's servants. He secured from civil and military servants alike signed covenants debarring them from receipt of presents. He also prohibited their participation in internal trade. To make good their losses it was decided to form 'a monopoly of the trade in salt, betelnut and tobacco, to be carried on exclusively for the benefit of the superior servants of the Company'. It was a plan to deprive the Indian merchants of their right to trade in some articles of common consumption in the interest of some 'superior servants of

the Company'. However, the company formed for this purpose was wound up under the orders of the Court of Directors.

Clive removed an abuse in the system of payment of allowances to military officers. Originally a field allowance was paid to make good the extra-cost of living in the field as compared with living in garrison. Then it was paid even in times of peace when the officers lived in garrison. Clive abolished this undue privilege (double *batta*) in the face of serious opposition.

Estimate of Clive

Clive left Bengal for the last time in February 1767. A scrutiny into his actions during his first Governorship led to a Parliamentary attack, but it concluded with a formal recognition of his 'great and meritorious service to his country'. He committed suicide in 1774.

Clive was not a great soldier. His principal military feat was the defence of Trichinopoly; the victory at Plassey was no demonstration of military genius. Nor was he a statesman capable of viewing high political problems in a big perspective and of setting up a system of administration with potentiality for progressive development. The acquisition of the *dewani* was a farsighted measure, but the system of 'Double Government' which he set up had to be abandoned in seven years' time. The political settlement with the Nawab of Oudh was a statesman-like arrangement. He has been described as 'a true pioneer of empire', possessing 'a certain rough hewn, almost elemental force and a tireless energy'. His capacity for leadership is best appreciated through a comparison between him and his leading French contemporaries in India. 'His principal defect was a certain moral bluntness which enabled him to perform and defend actions which did not commend themselves even to his own age'.

Verelst (1767-69)

The administration of Verelst (1767-69), who succeeded Clive, was necessarily a continuation of his system. 'While nobody was responsible for law and order and for the welfare of the people, the mock pageantry of a Nawab's administration continued its pitiful existence'.

The revenue demand was considerably enhanced after the assumption of the *dewani*, and the collection was very strict. Clive warned the Court of Directors in 1768 that no further increase was possible, and the Calcutta authorities thought that enhancement would prove 'destructive to the country', but the

Court of Directors insisted upon a larger income. It was from the revenues of Bengal that provision had to be made for the Company's 'investment' (for there was no export of specie from England) as also for meeting the Company's deficits in Madras and Bombay. The revenue administration in the *dewani* districts suffered from the corruption and oppression of the *amils* or revenue-collectors. They had to pay a fixed sum for the districts put in their charge. They had no connection with, or natural interest in the welfare of the areas where they made the collections, and they had no certainty of holding their places beyond a single year. They tried to make as much profit as possible by squeezing the people. The ceded districts (Burdwan, Midnapur, Chittagong), being directly under the management of the Company's servants, were in a better condition. The anomalies of the currency system—the absence of a standard coin and varying rates of *batta*—added to the difficulties of the payers of revenue.

With a view to improving the revenue administration Verelst proposed the appointment of English 'supervisors' in all districts. They were to superintend the work of the Indian officers who collected the revenue and administered justice. A European agency was to be superimposed on the Indian agency. The proposal was the first step towards direct assumption of administrative responsibility by the Company's servants. It was an anticipation of the system which was adopted later in the time of Warren Hastings.

Verelst's plan actually came into force in the time of his successor, Cartier. But the 'supervisors' found it impossible to perform even a part of the multifarious duties assigned to them. They faced opposition from *zamindars* and *amils*. They exploited their official position to add to their personal profits through inland trade. Verelst's well-intentioned plan 'made confusion more confounded and corruption more corrupt'. The Court of Directors ordered the withdrawal of the 'supervisors' in 1773.

Famine of 1770

Upon this ill-administered province fell a great catastrophe: the Famine of 1770. The direct cause was the failure of crops due to the scarcity of rain in 1768 and 1769. It raged in all virulence throughout the year 1770 and was followed by pestilence. It swept away about ten millions of human beings, comprising one-third of the total population of Bengal and Bihar; a large section of the survivors was reduced to beggary. The

total amount spent by the Government on relief for thirty millions of people was £ 9,000. On the other hand, the general distress was turned by many of the Company's officials and their *gomastahs* into a source of illicit private profit. They monopolized all available grain and compelled the poor ryots to sell even the seed required for the next harvest. At a time when 'the living were feeding on the dead' the worst profiteering was allowed to continue without inquiry or punishment. Despite the large mortality and the consequent decrease of cultivation, not even 5 per cent of the land-revenue was remitted, and 10 per cent was added to it next year. The surviving inhabitants of a village had to make up for the loss of revenue due to desertion or death of their neighbours. Cartier was the Governor of Bengal at the time (1769-72).

The decrease in population caused by the Famine seriously affected agricultural production and caused considerable dislocation in the economic life of the province. It affected the *zamindars*; their collections fell as the number and paying capacity of the peasantry were seriously affected. It affected the Company's commercial profits too, because it swept away many cultivators and artisans.

End of Clive's system

The Famine of 1770 formed a tragic *finale* to the chapter of administrative confusion ushered in by Clive in 1765. He had held out the prospect of an annual surplus of 122 *lakhs*. Then followed 'that period of delirium, during which it was asserted by some, and believed by many, that the revenue of the *dewani* lands was inexhaustible'. In 1767 the proprietors of the Company voted themselves a dividend of 12½ per cent, ignoring the objections of the Directors who knew that the Company was heavily in debt and that the increased dividend could be paid only by borrowing at a heavy interest. The impact of the Famine of 1770 hastened the Company's financial crisis which led to Parliamentary interference in its affairs (Regulating Act, 1773).

In 1771 the Directors recorded their censure of Muhammad Reza Khan who, they observed, had 'abused the trust reposed in him and been guilty of many acts of violence and injustice towards his countrymen'. They directed that a 'minute investigation' should be held into his 'general conduct during the time the *dewani* revenues have been under his charge'. But the condemnation of an individual was not enough; it was felt that the system of collecting the revenues through a *naib dewan* had

failed. The success of the Company's European servants in improving the collection of the revenues in the ceded districts seemed to indicate the desirability of employing them in the *dewani* districts as well. So the Court of Directors 'decided to stand forth as *dewan*, and by the agency of the Company's servants, to take upon themselves the entire care and management of the revenue'. This was the end of Clive's system of 'Double Government'. The Company was to throw off the 'mask' and appear directly as the ruler of Bengal.

'A total change in the management of the revenue was an innovation by which the whole property of the country, and along with it the administration of justice, were placed upon a new foundation'. The task of giving a concrete shape to the new system fell upon Warren Hastings who succeeded Cartier as Governor in April 1772.

CHAPTER 4

NORTH INDIA

1. BENGAL

Consolidation of British administration

The principal feature of the internal history of Bengal during the period 1772-93 was the consolidation of the administration of the Company. This depended to a large extent on a successful external policy, i.e., protection of the Company's larger political interests against the 'Country Powers' and the extension of the Company's influence at their cost. Considerable progress was made in this respect during the period 1772-93.

The Company's progress was due largely to the energy, initiative and political foresight of Warren Hastings, and in a lesser degree to the administrative and political measures of Lord Cornwallis. Hastings reached Calcutta in 1750 as a 'writer' (clerk) in the Company's service, rose to be Resident at the Nawab's *darbar*, and member of the Council at Calcutta. He returned to England in 1764 and came back in 1769 as second-in-Council at Madras. Promoted to the Governorship of Bengal, he held this office from April 1772 to October 1774. He acquired the designation of Governor-General (of Bengal) in October 1774 under the Regulating Act (1773) and retired in February 1785. He knew the people of Bengal well and was generally in tune with the country he governed. Cornwallis belonged to a different category. He held the office of Governor-General from September 1786 to October 1793. He had no experience of Indian affairs before his arrival in this country. He had extensive military experience in the Seven Years' War as also in the War of American Independence. He had helpful political connections in England. He was a friend of the Younger Pitt, the Prime Minister of England, and of Henry Dundas, the President of the Board of Control who was the Minister in charge of India under the Regulating Act. He was 'the first Governor-General who did not climb to power from the ranks of the Company's service'. Although formally appointed by the Company, he was really a nominee of Pitt's Ministry.

For Hastings his long experience of Bengal was a great advantage in his task of remodelling the administration. But he was not always free to follow his own ideas and methods. He

was subject to the remote control of the Court of Directors. He had to take note of party strife in Parliament over the Company's affairs. More immediately, he had to act in concert with the Council at Calcutta. During the period of Governorship the Council was a large body, and it was amenable to his guidance. The situation changed after the introduction of the Regulating Act which created a Council of four members. As Governor-General Hastings found himself obstructed by a hostile majority in the Council which he had no legal power to override. He had serious difficulties also with the Supreme Court created by the Regulating Act.

As Cornwallis had no experience of Bengal, he was dependent on advisers both in framing his policy and in working it out. Among them he owed much—specially in revenue matters—to (Sir) John Shore, a civilian officer of the Company, who succeeded him as Governor-General. Through his friendship with Pitt and Dundas he could depend upon the support of the 'Home' authorities. In 1786 an Act passed by Parliament freed the Governor-General from dependence upon the majority of his Council. He was empowered to act in special cases in opposition to their views. Another Act, passed by Parliament in 1781, curtailed the powers of the Supreme Court, and strengthened the position of the Governor-General and Council. These laws were very helpful for Cornwallis. He had another great advantage. He held the offices of Governor-General and Commander-in-chief; thus he exercised the highest civil as also the highest military authority.

Hastings: elimination of Shah Alam

Although the Company decided to 'stand forth as *dewan*', Hastings destroyed the legal basis of *dewani*. He did not believe that the authority of the Company was based on Shah Alam's *farman*; *dewani*, he thought, was 'a presumptuous gift of what was not his to give'. In his view it was 'the sword which gave us the dominion of Bengal'.

Acting under instructions from the Court of Directors, Hastings stopped the payment of 26 lakhs of rupees to Shah Alam on the ground that the puppet Emperor had left the Company's protection at Allahabad and entered Delhi as a protegee of the Marathas. As the payment was the primary condition of the grant of *dewani*, the grant stood cancelled when it was stopped; the Company's link with the Mughal Empire was severed. As Shah Alam was not strong enough

either to enforce payment or to take away the *dewani* from the Company, the stoppage of payment meant 'in effect a declaration of the practical independence of Bengal'. Shah Alam was also dispossessed of the districts of Kora and Allahabad which he had received from Clive in 1765. In 1775 the Supreme Court at Calcutta declared that the Nawab of Bengal had no sovereign power. Free from even nominal allegiance to the Emperor and formal dependence upon the Nawab, the Company emerged as a *de facto* sovereign power. The removal of the *Khalsa* (treasury) from Murshidabad to Calcutta by Hastings was public declaration of the Company's altered position.

Hastings: assumption of dewani

Hastings was 'armed with full powers to make a complete reformation', i.e., 'to destroy the whole fabric of the Double Government and to form a system for the government of Bengal'. This meant not only the collection of the revenues through the Company's servants but the reorganization of the whole civil administration. The preliminary step was the abolition of the offices of *naib dewan* of Bengal and Bihar. Both Muhammad Reza Khan and Shitab Rai were removed and prosecuted for speculation, but they were both acquitted. The Company 'stood forth as *dewan*'; English Collectors were appointed for each district, to be supervised by a Board of Revenue. The minor Nawab's pension was reduced to 16 lakhs.

Hastings: revenue experiments

'Hastings's genius did not lie in revenue matters'. His first experiment was the adoption of the system of farming for a five-year period, but it did not yield the expected results. In 1776 he appointed the Amini Commission to make an inquiry into the real value of the lands so that a new and more accurate settlement could be made. Its report was submitted in 1778. In 1781 the farming system was replaced by the *zamindari* system.

Alexander Dow, a military officer who wrote three volumes entitled *History of Hindustan*, published during the years 1768-72, introduced the idea of a permanent settlement of lands with the *zamindars*. This idea was elaborated by an economist named Henny Pattullo in his book *An Essay Upon the Cultivation of the Lands and Improvements of the Revenues of Bengal*, published in 1772. He hoped that the security of property ensured by a permanent settlement would promote investment in land and open long-term possibilities for British industries in India. The idea of recognizing the *zamindars* as proprietors of

lands on the basis of an unalterable revenue demand was advocated by Philip Francis, Hastings's most persistent and bitter opponent in the Council. He held that the *ryot* was not the proprietor of land, and the *ryot's* benefit was a matter of very minor concern for the State. 'The scheme of every regular government', he wrote, 'requires that the few should be supported by the labour of the many'. Hastings attached greater weight to the interest of the *ryot*. Francis differed with Hastings not only on the principles of revenue settlement but also on the organization of the machinery of collection. He failed to win the battle in Calcutta, but he won it in London after his departure from India (1780). He circulated papers explaining his views; 'these exercised a great influence in preparing for the revenue policy dictated by Pitt's India Act' which was passed by Parliament in 1784. That policy did not come into effect during the period of Hastings's Governor-Generalship. He did not succeed in evolving an efficient and enduring revenue system.

Hastings: judicial reforms

The first serious attempt to give Bengal a rational judicial system was made by Hastings. The judicial plan adopted in 1772 had two principal features: the establishment of a civil court and a criminal court in each district, and the establishment of a superior civil court (*Sadar Dewani Adalat*) at Calcutta and a superior criminal court (*Sadar Nizamat Adalat*) at Murshidabad. Five Provincial Councils were established at five important towns in 1773. Changes in respect of the composition and jurisdiction of these courts were made in subsequent years. In 1780 a series of regulations were passed for the better administration of justice. In 1781 the *dewani adalats* in the districts were brought under the supervision of the *Sadar Dewani Adalat*. Hastings's purpose was to centralize judicial administration outside the territorial jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.

The courts established by Hastings were the Company's courts, administering justice according to Muslim law, Hindu law and the regulations made by the Governor-General in Council. The Supreme Court, established at Calcutta in 1774, under the Regulating Act of 1773, was a King's court, administering justice according to English law. It had a Chief Justice and several puisne Judges appointed by the King of England. The Act gave it jurisdiction over 'all British subjects' residing in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, as also 'all persons' who were

'directly or indirectly' in the service of the Company or of any 'British subject'. These words were capable of different interpretations. The result was a serious conflict between the Company's Government (the Governor-General and Council) and the Supreme Court. Hastings was fully involved in this conflict; the main issue was whether the *zamindars* were subject to the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. The matter was clarified—mainly in favour of the Company's Government—by an Act passed by Parliament in 1781.

Hastings : commercial reforms

Hastings abolished the fraudulent use of the *dastak*; the goods of the Company's servants or their agents were no longer to be exempted from dues. To facilitate free circulation of goods he abolished the *chokeys* (custom-houses) in the *zamindaris*. Only five central custom-houses were maintained—at Calcutta, Hughli, Murshidabad, Patna and Dacca. Duties on all goods, except the Company's monopolies of salt, betel-nut and tobacco, were to be levied at a uniform rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, to be paid by all Europeans and Indians alike. Hastings claimed that 'goods pass unmolested to the extremes of the province'. He succeeded to some extent in reviving the decaying internal trade of Bengal.

Hastings as administrator

The real value of the work done by Hastings in the sphere of internal administration lies in his executive skill. He owed much to directives issued by the Court of Directors and suggestions coming from others, but in carrying out reforms in several fields he revealed 'administrative capacities of a unique kind'. He made some efforts for purifying the administration, but much was left for Cornwallis to do. It has been said that 'the whole system of the government over which he presided was corrupt and full of abuses'. But corrupt influences in London as also at Calcutta tied his hands. So 'he compromised to a certain extent with evil, and to bind men to his interests, he freely used the means of patronage at his disposal'. He had an exceptionally long tenure of power, but he felt that he had to leave his work unfinished. He described his political system as 'a great and weighty fabric, of which all the parts were yet loose ...'.

Hastings and Nanda Kumar

In 1775 Maharaja Nanda Kumar, an influential Brahmin official of the Nawabi regime, accused Hastings of having taken

a heavy bribe from Mir Jafar's widow, Munni Begam, as the price for her appointment as the guardian of the minor Nawab, who was her step-son. The majority of the members of the Council, including Philip Francis, who were hostile to Hastings, declared Hastings to be guilty and ordered him to refund the money. Hastings brought a counter-complaint against Nanda Kumar that he had coerced a person named Kamaluddin to bring false charges against the Governor-General. While the matter was pending Nanda Kumar was prosecuted for forgery on the complaint of one Mohan Prasad. He was found guilty by the Supreme Court, sentenced to death and executed.

This execution has been condemned by a competent authority as 'judicial murder'. The evidence against Nanda Kumar was inadequate. The Judges, particularly Chief Justice Sir Elijah Impey who was a friend of Hastings, were hostile to the accused. It was doubtful whether the Supreme Court had jurisdiction in the case. The English law making forgery a capital crime was probably not operative in India. After conviction the Chief Justice did not exercise the power of reprieve which was vested in him. There are grounds for suspicion that he was anxious to help Hastings for whom the elimination of this bold accuser was a 'dire necessity'. Burke said that Nanda Kumar was 'hanged for a pretended crime, upon an *ex post facto* Act of Parliament, in the midst of his evidence against Mr. Hastings'. *Cornwallis: administrative and judicial reforms*

The immediate successor of Warren Hastings was Sir John Macpherson, an experienced servant of the Company, who held the office of Governor-General in a temporary capacity for less than two years (February 1785—September 1786). His administration was described by the next Governor-General, Lord Cornwallis, as a 'system of the dirtiest jobbing'. Cornwallis came to India with instructions to remove abuses and corruption in the administrative system.

The administrative machinery was divided into two branches: commercial and revenue. The Company's servants were transferred from one branch to the other, without any regard for their experience or personal preference. Cornwallis separated the branches, allowing the Company's servants to opt for either branch on a permanent basis. The business of the general branch was distributed between two departments: the general department dealing with civil, military and marine matters,

and the revenue department dealing with the collection of revenue and administration of justice.

For the better administration of revenue and justice the existing system in the districts was reorganized. The number of districts in Bengal and Bihar was reduced from 35 to 23. Each district was in charge of a European Collector with two European Assistants. The Collector was given judicial powers in respect of both civil and criminal cases. He became the chief instrument of the Company's authority in the district. In view of his increased duties and responsibilities his salary was raised. Moreover, he was given a commission on the revenue collected in his district as a compensation for the loss of the right to engage in private trade. This arrangement was modified later; the Collector was divested of his judicial and magisterial functions, and the Judge became the Magistrate.

Criminal justice lay largely, though not wholly, in Indian hands. Muhammad Reza Khan presided over the *Sadar Nizamat Adalat* at Murshidabad, and the judges of the lower criminal courts—all of them Muslims—functioned under his supervision. Cornwallis transferred the *Sadar Nizamat Adalat* to Calcutta; Muhammad Reza Khan was removed, and the *Adalat* was henceforth to consist of the Governor-General and Council. Four courts of circuit were established at Calcutta, Murshidabad, Dacca and Patna to try criminal cases. But they also exercised civil jurisdiction and were, in that capacity, known as provincial courts of appeal. Over each of them there were two English judges, assisted by *qazis* and *muftis*. Criminal justice was administered according to Muslim law. In matters relating to marriage, inheritance, etc., the Hindus were governed by Hindu law and the Muslims by Muslim law. Brahmins (*Pandits*) were appointed to assist the European judges in interpreting Hindu law.

A very prominent feature of the administrative and judicial reforms of Cornwallis was the systematic and deliberate exclusion of Indians from all high posts under the Company. He believed that 'every native of Hindustan' was corrupt. This unenlightened policy received the indirect approval of Parliament through the Charter Act of 1793.

Cornwallis Code (1793)

The Cornwallis Code—a systematized restatement of regulations made by the Governor-General and Council—was issued

in May 1793. It covered the whole field of administration: the commercial system, civil and criminal justice, police and land-revenue.

One of the most important features of the Code was the separation of powers. 'A distribution of the legislative, executive and judicial powers of the State, analogous to that which forms the basis of the British Constitution, was made the foundation of the constitution of the Government of Bengal'. It was a radical departure from the Mughal system of government. For instance, the offices of Collector and Judge were separated, and it was provided that all officers of the Government—including the Collectors—would be 'amenable to the courts for acts done in their official capacities'. Indeed, 'Government itself, in cases in which it may be a party with its subjects in matters of property, shall submit its rights to be tried in these courts under the existing laws and regulations'. Thus the law, administered by the judges, would be supreme. This principle 'laid the foundation of the civil liberty of the subject which was the essential basis for the later addition of the political liberty of self-government'.

The Cornwallis system marked a definite improvement on the arbitrary methods and unrestrained executive authority which characterised the Mughal system, but it had serious defects. 'Cornwallis confounded courts of justice with justice itself'. The laws were unfamiliar to the people; the European judges were ignorant of the languages, manners and customs of the litigants. In such a situation justice could not be guaranteed simply by establishing courts and issuing regulations. Law, indeed, could degenerate into an instrument of oppression at the disposal of men with influence and long purses.

The Cornwallis system emphasized the principle of judicial settlement of all disputes and thereby promoted litigiousness among the people. Its introduction synchronized with the emergence of professional lawyers (*vakils*). Formerly, the suitors appeared in person or engaged private agents to plead their cases. This simple arrangement did not suit a system in which both substantive and procedural law became extremely technical and complicated. The course of justice was impeded by the intricacies of law, its delay and expenses.

The Cornwallis system weakened the administration. The executive officers hesitated to act promptly and firmly lest the legality of their measures should be challenged in court. This

point was stressed in the Report of the Orissa Famine (1866) Commission.

Permanent Settlement (1793)

The most important administrative measure associated with the name of Cornwallis is the Permanent Settlement. But he was not at all responsible for the policy behind this solution of the land revenue problem; he simply executed the policy formulated by the 'Home' authorities. Influenced by the ideas of Philip Francis, Parliament laid down in Pitt's India Act (1784) that 'permanent rules' should be made 'for the settlement and collection of the revenue'. In 1785 the Court of Directors observed that 'frequent variations' in the revenue system had in previous years been 'attended with much inconvenience and great expense'. Orders were issued to adopt a 'settled plan'. Accordingly, some administrative measures were adopted by the acting Governor-General Macpherson (1786), which 'laid the foundation on which the Permanent Settlement subsequently rested'.

Cornwallis came with orders to execute the instructions issued by the Court of Directors a few months before his arrival at Calcutta. The Court's policy, framed in conformity with the directive of Parliament (Pitt's India Act), had three features. First, revenue settlements were to be made on a permanent and unalterable basis. Second, settlements were to be made with the *zamindars* who had some hereditary interest in the lands, and not with farmers who were external speculators. Third, the settlement should be moderate so as to reconcile the company's 'interest' with the 'happiness of the natives and security of the landholders'. The primary purpose was to ensure 'regular and punctual' collection of the revenue. The *zamindars* were expected to be the most useful and trustworthy collecting agents. Their 'security' was to be ensured by two guarantees: their dues would not be liable to enhancement in future, and their hereditary tenure would be recognized. There was no express recognition of the interest of the ryots; probably the vague expression 'happiness of the natives' indicated the Directors' formal concern for their welfare. In these instructions of the Court of Directors we have the antecedents of the Permanent Settlement almost in a finished form.

The Government was not in possession of sufficient information which could form the basis of 'the permanent and unalterable revenue of Bengal'. Enquiries were made from the

Collectors of the districts (1787-89). Anxious to implement the Directors' policy as speedily as possible, Cornwallis introduced a settlement for ten years (Decennial Settlement) in 1790, with a declaration that it would be converted into permanent settlement upon the approval of the Court of Directors. Long before the expiry of the ten-year period the Decennial Settlement was declared to be permanent (March 1793). Cornwallis ignored the advice of John Shore who was the most experienced expert on revenue matters in Bengal at this time.

The Permanent Settlement was made with three categories of persons: 'zamindars', 'independent talukdars', and 'other actual proprietors of land'. The term 'zamindar' covered tributary princes (such as the Rajas of Cooch Behar and Tripura), landholders in charge of big estates whose family history went back to Mughal times (such as the Rajas of Burdwan, Nadia, Rajshahi and Dinajpur), and revenue farmers or their successors who assumed charge of estates in the post-*Dewani* period. The term 'independent talukdars' meant those 'talukdars' who, instead of paying their dues to the State through 'zamindars', entered into direct engagements with the Government. The term 'other actual proprietors of land' covered small landholders, including owners of a few acres, who paid their revenue directly to the public treasury.

Thus the beneficiaries of the Permanent Settlement formed a heterogeneous class although the common term 'zamindar' is generally applied to them. Cornwallis conferred four distinct benefits upon them: (1) recognition of their ownership of land; (2) fixation of their revenue payable to the Government on a permanent and unalterable basis; (3) practical non-interference of the Government in their relations with their tenants (*ryots*), including the determination of the rent payable by the latter; (4) opportunity of increasing their income through promotion of cultivation of waste lands included in their estates.

The punctual payment of the revenue by the 'zamindars' to the Government was the primary condition of their enjoyment of these benefits. Cornwallis made stringent provisions for the sale of estates from which arrears of revenue were due. No direct provision was made for the protection of the *ryots* against the excessive demands of the 'zamindars'; but one of the regulations reserved the Government's right to make "laws for the protection and welfare of the dependent talukdars, ryots, and other cultivators of the soil".

The primary object of the Permanent Settlement was to ensure the regular flow of the land-revenue into the Government treasury. This was necessary because the Company had to meet the rising expenses of its civil and military establishments, to provide subsidies for the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay which had inadequate incomes, and to collect funds for its trade in India and China. Financial necessity was supplemented by political necessity. The 'zamindars' who were the beneficiaries of the Permanent Settlement were expected to assist the Company's Government in cases of any external invasion 'from motives of self-interest' because their permanent status as landowners was linked with the stability of British rule. Another object was to divert the capital accumulated by richer classes among the Indians from trade (in which many of them took part at that time) to land. It was hoped that the stability of income assured by investment in land—as against the risk involved in trade—as also the high status of the 'zamindars' in Bengali society, would attract these classes; and their gradual withdrawal from trade would improve the commercial prospects of the English traders.

As Cornwallis left India within a few months of the introduction of the Permanent Settlement, even its immediate effects did not come to the surface during his administration.

Cornwallis as administrator

Cornwallis did not change the dual character of the Company as a commercial monopolist and an instrument of administration. Indeed, he was opposed to the idea of depriving the Company of its commercial monopoly, and it was not till 1813 that a Charter Act restricted the Company's monopoly to the tea trade and the China trade. He tried to improve the efficiency of the Company's administration by removing the grosser forms of corruption which had previously stained its servants. But this progressive outlook was marred by the total exclusion of Indians from responsible administrative posts which widened the gulf between the people and their alien rulers. Another progressive measure—the recognition of the supremacy of law—led to undue emphasis on the judicial process, laws' delay, waste of money on litigation, and bitterness in rural areas. For the principle behind the Permanent Settlement Cornwallis had no personal responsibility; but the hasty introduction of the system without adequate analysis of relevant data, which Shore urged with persistence, was responsible for serious evils.

2. OUDH

Treaty of Benares (1773)

As Governor of Bengal (1772-74) Warren Hastings was responsible for the external relations of the Company with the North Indian powers, primarily with the Nawab of Oudh, Shujauddaula, who had become a protected ally of the English under the treaty of Allahabad (1765) concluded by Clive. The Nawab's dominions formed a buffer State on the north-west, and its security was an essential requisite for the security of Bihar and Bengal. Ahmad Shah Abdali's death in 1772 removed the Afghan menace, for his son and successor, Timur Shah Abdali, did not follow his policy of bold aggression. Jawahir Singh's death in 1768 had crippled the Jats. The death of the Rohilla chief Najibuddaula, Ahmad Shah Abdali's lieutenant in India and the dictator of Delhi, in 1770 had removed a potential antagonist of the Nawab of Oudh. But the Marathas had recovered from the disaster at Panipat (1761) under the able leadership of Peshwa Madhav Rao I and recovered to some extent their ascendancy in North India. They occupied Delhi in 1771 and brought the puppet Emperor Shah Alam from Allahabad to the imperial capital under their protection in January 1772. The revival of Maratha power in North India and the desertion by Shah Alam of the Company's protection under the Maratha flag changed the situation contemplated by Clive in 1765 and called for a reorientation of the Company's policy.

The keynote of Hasting's policy in 1772-73 was to withdraw the Company's support from Shah Alam and to strengthen Oudh politically and militarily. Kora and Allahabad were taken away from the Emperor, and the payment of the Bengal tribute (26 lakhs per year) was stopped. By a treaty concluded with Shuja at Benares in September 1773 the two districts were ceded to him in return for 50 lakhs of rupees. It was also provided that whenever he employed a British brigade, he should pay a subsidy of 210,000 rupees per month. The cession was intended to strengthen the Nawab and, at the same time, to isolate him from the Marathas who 'advanced pretensions' to Kora on the basis of a grant issued by Shah Alam. The amount of 50 lakhs 'relieved the Company's necessities'. By a secret agreement the Company undertook to furnish a brigade to help the Nawab in conquering the territory of the Rohillas. In return he was to bear all expenses of the campaign and to pay an additional sum of 40 lakhs.

Rohilla War (1774)

The hostility with the Rohillas was inherited by Shuja from his father, Safdar Jang; neither of them liked Afghan rule in a district so close to Oudh. The Marathas captured the stronghold of Najibuddaula's son and successor, Zabita Khan, and compelled the other Rohilla chieftains, headed by Hafiz Rahmat Khan, to take shelter in the hills. To escape further troubles from the Marathas, Hafiz Rahmat Khan concluded an offensive and defensive alliance with Shuja (June 1772). This was sealed in the presence of Sir Robert Barker, the British Commander-in-Chief, but the Company was not a party to the treaty. The Rohilla chiefs agreed to pay the Nawab 40 *lakhs* for 'obliging the Marathas to retire either by peace or war'. The Marathas withdrew from Rohilla territory, but it was well known that they would return soon. They crossed into the Doab; Shuja secured the Company's military aid. But they retreated, and finally left for the Deccan (May 1773), as political complications had arisen at Poona following the death of Peshwa Madhav Rao I in November 1772. They did not reappear in North India until 1784.

This was the background of the treaty of Benares. After the retreat of the Marathas Shuja demanded payment of 40 *lakhs* from the Rohillas, but they refused to pay on the plea that the Marathas had really retired of their own accord and they might return next year. Shuja asked for the Company's help in annexing Rohilkhand. Hastings agreed, arguing that 'our ally would obtain by this acquisition a complete State shut in effectually from foreign invasion by the British'. A joint expedition of English and Oudh forces was arranged. The Rohillas were crushed at the battle of Miranpur Katra (April 1774). Among the killed was Hafiz Rahmat Khan. Rohilkhand was incorporated in Shuja's territories; only a small portion (Rampur) was left in the possession of a Rohilla chief.

The Rohilla War was one of the most controversial episodes in the career of Hastings. He was criticised in Parliament in 1786 for his part in it, but the House of Commons did not include the matter in the Articles of Impeachment. Even his greatest modern defender, Sir John Strachey, admits that his policy was 'somewhat cynical'. The Rohillas might have been technically wrong in declining to pay 40 *lakhs* to the Nawab of Oudh; but European nations have often evaded treaty obligations on no better grounds. In any case they had given no

provocation to the Company. They were not allies of the Marathas whom Hastings dreaded; in any case the Marathas were too much involved at that time in their own problems at Poona to threaten either Rohilkhand or Oudh. Hastings himself admitted that the question of money was one of his main motives. Apart from participation in a war 'against a nation from whom the English had received no injury', Hastings could hardly escape political and moral responsibility for the atrocities committed by the victorious troops upon the Rohillas.

Chait Singh

Chait Singh, the ruler of Benares, was bound by treaty to pay an annual tribute of 22½ lakhs to the Company. In 1777-78 Hastings realized from him additional contributions to meet the expenses of the First Anglo-Maratha War. In 1780 Chait Singh failed to furnish the full contingent of cavalry demanded from him. Hastings imposed a fine of 50 lakhs, went personally to Benares, and placed him under arrest. The Raja's troops rose against the English. Hastings suppressed them, expelled Chait Singh, selected his nephew as his successor, and raised the tribute to 40 lakhs. His conduct was condemned by the Court of Directors as 'unwarrantable and impolitic'.

Begams of Oudh

On the death of Shujauddaula (1775) a new treaty was concluded with his successor, Asafuddaula. He was reduced to the position of a subordinate ally. Benares with its dependencies was ceded in perpetuity to the Company. To a regular brigade of the Company's troops stationed in Oudh at the Nawab's expense, a second brigade was added in 1777 and some detached contingents were also placed in his pay. The English army, as Philip Francis said, 'devoured his revenues and his country under cover of defending it'. His debt to the Company in 1780 amounted to £1,400,000. Next year he proposed that he should be permitted to seize the wealth of the old ladies of his family to pay his arrears. Hastings agreed to this arrangement and instructed the Resident at the Nawab's *darbar* to allow 'no negotiations or forbearance ... until the Begams are at the entire mercy of the Nawab'. The Company's troops were sent to Faizabad. The Begams' servants were confined and tortured. Their treasure was seized (1782). Hastings tried to justify his conduct by alleging that the Begams were guilty of collusion with Chait Singh. This charge was not supported by good evidence. Even if the Begams deserved punishment there was

no justification for 'the employment of personal severities, under the superintendence of British officers, in order to extract money from women and eunuchs'.

Impeachment of Hastings

Hastings had to face an Impeachment on his return to England. The managers included Philip Francis, his old opponent in Calcutta, and Edmund Burke, the eminent political thinker who was also an active politician. The proceedings started in 1786 and continued till 1795. There were as many as 23 charges, including Hasting's treatment of Chait Singh and the Begams of Oudh on which the highest number of adverse votes was recorded. The House of Lords finally granted him full acquittal. But his honour was not fully vindicated, for he was debarred from further employment or public honours.

The impeachment of Hastings was—for the English Whigs—a demonstration of 'humanitarian principles', of Parliament's responsibility for good government in India, and of the relevance of moral considerations in political matters. His acquittal did not mean that they had failed. His suffering was a clear warning to the Company's servants in general that conduct of doubtful property would be open to scrutiny.

Decline of Oudh

During the reign of Asafuddaula (1775-97) Oudh declined politically as also economically, and for this British connection was in a large measure responsible. Corruption was rife; administration was weak and inefficient. The Nawab, wrote Cornwallis, extorted 'every rupee he can from his ministers, to squander in debaucheries, cock-fighting, elephants and horses', and the object of the ministers was 'to cheat and plunder the country'. The evils were aggravated during the Governor-Generalship of Macpherson by his patronage for persons not in the Company's service in securing contracts, monopolies and other privileges in Oudh.

Cornwallis gave the Nawab some relief by reducing the tribute from 84 lakhs to 50 lakhs, but he declined to cut down the numerical strength of the Company's troops in Oudh.

Shore's policy

Sir John Shore, who succeeded Cornwallis as Governor-General, faced a dispute for succession after Asafuddaula's death. There were two aspirants: the deceased Nawab's brother Sa'adat Ali and his reputed son Wazir Ali. Shore recognized

Sa'adat Ali as Nawab and secured from him a treaty (1798) by which the tribute was raised to 76 *lakhs*, the fort of Allahabad was ceded to the Company, and the number of the Nawab's troops was restricted. Moreover, the new Nawab agreed not to have any communication with a foreign power, nor to take any European in his service, nor to permit any European to settle in his dominions. The occupation of the fort of Allahabad, which was 'the military key of the province', strengthened the Company's military power in the upper Ganges valley.

Shore's general policy was non-intervention in the affairs of the 'Country Powers', but he made an exception in the case of Oudh. This was due to the renewal of the Afghan menace on the north-west. Zaman Shah, grandson of Ahmad Shah Abdali, invaded India several times during the years 1794-98. Shore believed that he intended, 'in concert with Tipu Sultan' of Mysore, to 'depress the British power in India'.

Wellesley's policy

Lord Wellesley, who succeeded Shore in 1798, had to face a petty rising on the part of Wazir Ali. He had difficulties with Sa'adat Ali, who was weak, incompetent and vacillating. The condition of Oudh, he felt, needed 'the active and decided interference of the British Government'. Moreover, he considered it necessary to strengthen the defence of Oudh in view of the possibility of Zaman Shah's reappearance on the north-west.

Wellesley ordered several regiments to move into the north of Oudh and required Sa'adat Ali to maintain them. The Nawab replied that this was contrary to his treaty with Shore. He was then compelled to sign a treaty (1801) ceding to the Company Rohilkhand, the Lower Doab (the large and fertile tract between the Ganges and the Jumna) and the Gorakhpur region. Wellesley's ostensible purpose was to secure possession of such a portion of the Nawab's dominions 'as shall be fully adequate to repay the expenses of the troops'. The arrangement ensured the 'territorial isolation of the Nawab'; a barrier was raised between his dominions and 'any foreign enemy'. The Nawab promised to improve his administration. But abuses accumulated till they provided justification for annexation in 1856.

3. THE MARATHAS

Peshwa Madhav Rao I (1761-72)

Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao died (June 1761) within six months

of the battle of Panipat. As his eldest son Vishwas Rao had been killed at Panipat, his second son Madhav Rao succeeded him. He was then in his seventeenth year; his uncle Raghunath Rao became Regent and the *de facto* ruler of the State.

The young Peshwa had to deal with the hostilities of the Nizam and the rebellions of Raghunath Rao and Janoji Bhonsle of Berar. Several successful expeditions against Haidar Ali of Mysore brought him victories and considerable accession of territory. His brief reign also saw the revival of the Maratha power in North India.

The destruction of the Maratha army at Panipat was naturally followed by a revolt against Maratha domination everywhere in Hindustan—in the Gangetic Doab, Bundelkhand, Rajasthan, and Malwa. For several years grave political and military problems in South India kept the Marathas too busy to return in full force to North India, but North India was not ignored.

The task of restoring Maratha authority in Rajasthan and Malwa, immediately after Panipat, fell upon Malhar Rao Holkar. He began his operations in the middle of 1761, and towards the end of the year he defeated Madho Singh of Jaipur who had been trying to set up an anti-Maratha coalition consisting of Najibuddaula and Yaqub Ali, who were Ahmad Shah Abdali's agents in Delhi, the nominal Emperor Shah Alam II, and some petty Rajput chiefs of Malwa and Rajasthan. Holkar's victory ruined the Jaipur Raja's plan and restored Maratha prestige throughout Hindustan. There was, however, a set back in Bundelkhand; Shujauddaula and his protegee Shah Alam II occupied a part of the country and dealt a blow at Maratha authority (1762).

During the years 1762-64 the Marathas did not pursue a vigorous policy in North India. Holkar was partly incapacitated by old age and ill health. Mahadji Sindhia was busy with the question of succession to his father's *jagir*. In 1764 Ahmad Shah Abdali ratified a formal peace with the Marathas, thereby recognizing their still surviving power.

During the years 1764-66 Holkar intervened in the hostilities between the Jat ruler Jawahir Singh and Najibuddaula, faced the East India Company's army and suffered a defeat at Kora, and occupied Jhansi. There was a rupture with Jawahir Singh who, allied with the Sikhs, defeated the Marathas near Dholpur. Holkar's operations were interrupted by his death

(May 1766). Meanwhile Mahadji Sindhia had come to North India. His efforts were directed mainly to realisation of tribute from the Rajput States.

Starting from the Deccan towards the close of 1765, Raghunath Rao advanced to Malwa and took tribute from Bhopal. He was joined in 1766 by Holkar and Sindhia, but the former died within a few weeks. The campaign against Gohad, which Holkar had begun, was completed. Bhilsa was captured. Plans were made for realization of tribute from the Rajput princes, but Raghunath Rao hastily departed for the Deccan on receipt of a threatening letter from Ahmad Shah Abdali. Jawahir Singh took advantage of his unwise retreat; he occupied large tracts in Bundelkhand and Malwa and defeated Madho Singh at Maonda (1767). Only Gwalior and Jhansi remained under Maratha control.

The murders of Jawahir Singh and his successor Ratan Singh in 1768-69, followed by a civil war in the Jat State, cleared the ground for renewal of the Maratha offensive in North India. Under orders of Peshwa Madhav Rao a large army under Mahadji Sindhia and Tukoji Holkar (successor of Malhar Rao Holkar) arrived in North India. After realization of tribute from Mewar this army was joined by large forces sent from the Deccan under Ramchandra Ganesh and Visaji Krishna.

In 1770 the Jat ruler, Nawal Singh, was defeated at Sonkh (midway between Kumbher and Mathura). A few months later Najibuddaula died. It was a very favourable opportunity for restoration of Maratha influence in North India, for 'no strong enemy was left in the region west of British-protected Oudh'. But personal jealousy and lack of political foresight stood in the way of success. Ramchandra Ganesh and Visaji Krishna could not act in co-operation. The tradition of hereditary dissension separated Mahadji Sindhia and Tukoji Holkar. There was no agreement on policy questions and plans of campaigns.

Knowing that Shah Alam II was uneasy at Allahabad and desired to come to Delhi to sit on the imperial throne, Raghunath Rao started negotiations with him in 1766. But the helpless Emperor hesitated and depended upon evasive promises from Shujauddaula and the English. Despair threw him into the arms of Mahadji Sindhia in December 1770. Sindhia and Visaji Krishna occupied Delhi in January 1771; the dictator of the capital, Najibuddaula, had died in October 1770, Shah Alam started from Allahabad in April 1771 and reached Delhi

in January 1772. There he became a protege of the Marathas.

The Peshwa recalled Ramchandra Ganesh and entrusted the supreme command to Visaji Krishna, but neither Sindhia nor Holkar submitted to his authority. Despite the great political success in Delhi dissensions continued in the Maratha camp. Their aggressiveness alarmed the Rohillas who concluded a treaty of alliance with Shujauddaula (June 1772). They withdrew from Rohilla territory during the rainy season of 1772; but sometime later they crossed into the Doab, and Shujauddaula secured the Company's military aid. In May 1773 they left for the Deccan as political complications had arisen following the death of Peshwa Madhav Rao in November 1772. They did not reappear in North India until 1784.

In spite of internal difficulties, the hostilities of the Nizam and Haidar Ali in the Deccan, and the large number of enemies in North India, the Marathas achieved considerable successes in Hindustan during the decade following their rout at Panipat. They reoccupied Malwa and Bundelkhand, exacted tribute from the leading Rajput princes, almost crushed the Jats and the Rohillas, occupied Delhi, and established the fugitive Emperor Shah Alam on his ancestral throne. Their successes would certainly have been more spectacular had their leaders not been preoccupied with personal interests and mutual jealousies. Peshwa Madhav Rao, who provided direct leadership in the campaigns in South India, was not present in the field in North India to restore unity in a house divided against itself. His premature death did not immediately alter the Maratha programme in North India. The army sent by him lingered on and tried to consolidate its position by campaigns against the Rohillas and the Nawab of Oudh; but political complications called it back to Poona. More than a decade passed in civil war with which was linked a war with the English. When the Marathas appeared in North India again the political scene had been completely altered by the growing power of the English, the Peshwa had ceased to be the active central authority for the Maratha Empire as a whole, and the championship of Maratha interests in Hindustan had developed on Sindhia and Holkar.

Mahadji Sindhia

Mahadji Sindhia was the only surviving son of Ranoji Sindhia after the disaster at Panipat. He began to function as the *de facto* chief of the Sindhia *jagir* in Central India from 1762. His position was formally recognized by Peshwa Madhav

Rao I in 1767. He had already taken Gwalior from the Rana of Gohad (1766), and 'the historic association of Gwalior with the house of 'Sindhia' had begun.

Mahadji gained prominence in war and politics in the North Indian campaigns during the years 1766-73. He played a crucial role in the First Anglo-Maratha War. After the treaty of Salbai which concluded that war (1782) he spent two years in consolidating his own position in Malwa and Bundelkhand. In 1784 he re-established Maratha influence in Delhi by bringing Shah Alam under his protection. The virtual defeat inflicted on him by the Rajputs at Lalsot (1787) sent him temporarily to the wilderness; but he regained control over the Emperor by his victory over the Rohilla chief Ghulam Kadir in 1788. In 1790 his victories on the Rajputs at Patna and Merta added to his power and prestige. He left for the Deccan in 1792 and remained at Poona till his death in 1794. Here he found opposition from Nana Fadnavis, the powerful minister who ruled in the name of the young Peshwa Madhav Rao Narayan (Sawai Madhav Rao). He was succeeded by Daulat Rao Sindhia whose plans to secure ascendancy in the Poona court dragged him into the Second Anglo-Maratha War.

Mahadji's military successes in his later years were due largely to his adoption of European methods of war. His experience of the superior fighting qualities of the Company's troops in Gujarat and in Malwa during the First Anglo-Maratha War led him to build his army on the European model. In this difficult task he was aided by a Savoyard captain. De Boigne, who joined his service in 1784. De Boigne raised several battalions of infantry with proper equipment and artillery. As the Marathas were accustomed to fight in the cavalry and looked down upon the infantry, he recruited troops—Rajputs and Muslims—from Oudh, Rohilkhand and the Doab. 'The new army brought Sindhia spectacular successes against the Indian rulers; but during the process the military became completely denationalised'. The Maratha cavalry lost its *elan*; the rank and file of the infantry failed to grasp the higher tactics and strategy. Dependence upon foreign commanders was a serious mistake; they deserted Daulat Rao Sindhia during the Second Anglo-Maratha War. The Sindhia battalions failed miserably in the battles of Assaye and Laswari in 1803.

The Holkars

Sometime after Malhar Rao Holkar's death (1766) his

widowed daughter-in-law. Ahalya Bai, became the head of the administration in his *jagir* and appointed Tukoji Holkar, who was not related to the ruling family, to the command of the army. Ahalya Bai managed the civil affairs; she gained universal respect by her charities and devotion to religion. Tukoji Holkar, instead of trying to gain predominance in the State, remained content with military command. This unusual arrangement worked satisfactorily for about thirty years.

Ahalya Bai's 'great object' was 'by just and moderate government, to improve the condition of the country while she promoted the happiness of her people'. Indore, the capital of the State, became a prosperous city. The army under Tukoji Holkar's guidance took part in the expedition to North India sent by Peshwa Madhav Rao I, in the First Anglo-Maratha War, in the Peshwa's war against Tipu Sultan (1786) and in other campaigns. During the years 1788-93 the traditional hostility with Sindhia was revived. The Holkar army suffered a heavy defeat at Lakheri (June 1793). 'The two main props of the Maratha confederacy worked against each other and in the end weakened the entire structure'.

Mahadji Sindhia died in 1794. Ahalya Bai in 1795, and Tukoji Holkar in 1796. In the diplomatic game played by Nana Fadnavis, Peshwa Baji Rao II and Daulat Rao Sindhia, two of Tukoji's sons were eliminated; his illegitimate son, Yashwant Rao Holkar, emerged as the ruler of the Holkar State.

The Bhonsles

Raghuji Bhonsle, the conqueror of Orissa, died in 1755. There were disputes among his four sons about the succession. Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao recognized the eldest among them, Janoji, as the head of the State with the title of *Sena Saheb Subah* but assigned some districts to two other sons. The Peshwa's purpose was to weaken the chiefship by dividing the estates among the rival brothers. The result was twofold: the Bhonsle family was alienated from the Peshwa family and it took little part in the common affairs of the Maratha Empire.

After the accession of Peshwa Madhav Rao I, Janoji Bhonsle intrigued with Raghunath Rao to oust him and then joined the Nizam in invading the Peshwa's territory. Madhav Rao won him over by the grant of an additional *jagir*; but his recalcitrance continued, and open war followed (1765-66). After an interval of uneasy peace another war (1768-69) followed in consequence of Janoji's support for Raghunath Rao's claim to

Peshwaship. An agreement was concluded; Janoji promised to obey the Peshwa as the head of the Maratha State, to serve him with 5,000 troops whenever called upon to do so, and to abstain from conducting negotiations with any foreign power without permission from the Peshwa. For the first time an attempt was made to define clearly the relations between the central power (represented by the Peshwa) and the feudatory powers.

Janoji was incapable of maintaining order in the State, and under him the Bhonsle army ceased to be an effective military instrument. He died in 1772 without any issue. After protracted disputes about succession, which were linked with political complications at Poona following the murder of Peshwa Narayan Rao, Raghuji II (son of Janoji's brother Mudhoji) became *Sena Saheb Subah* in 1775, but actual power remained in Mudhoji's hands till his death in 1788. Mudhoji's role in the First Anglo-Maratha War weakened the Maratha alliance against the Company. After assumption of power Raghuji II took part in the battle of Kharda against the Nizam (1795). He ruled over an extensive territory yielding a large revenue; but 'its resources were frittered away on a second-rate court and a second-rate army'. The Second Anglo-Maratha War proved disastrous for the Bhonsle State.

The Gaikwars

Damaji Gaikwar, who had risen to power in Gujarat as the deputy of *Senapati* Dabhade, became a subordinate tributary of the Peshwa in 1751. He took part in the expedition of the Peshwa's army to North India (1760) as also in the Peshwa's battle at Rakshasbhuvan against the Nizam (1763). He supported Raghunath Rao in his bid for Peshwaship against Madhav Rao. He brought practically the whole of Gujarat, including Kathiawar, under his rule, expelling the local Muslim chiefs. He died in 1768.

The history of Gujarat during the last three decades of the eighteenth century is 'a sickening tale of fratricidal strife between members of the Gaikwar family, and the intercession of the Peshwa's Government and the Company's Government to satisfy their own ends'. In 1771 Damaji's two sons Govind Rao and Fateh Singh, obtained joint control of the State. They were bitter enemies; they fought on opposite sides in the First Anglo-Maratha War. The treaty of Salbai (1782) recognized Fateh Singh's position as a *jagirdar* of the Maratha State. After

his death (1789)—followed by the death of two of his brothers—Govind Rao became the ruler of the State (1793). The effects of his incompetence were aggravated by internal dissensions and the hostility of the Poona court. At the time of his death (1800) the treasury was empty and 'all power lay in the hands of rapacious and overbearing Arab soldiery'. During the administration of his feeble son and successor, Anand Rao, Baroda concluded a subsidiary treaty with the Company (1802).

4. MUGHAL PADSHAHI

Mirza Najaf Khan

When Shah Alam II returned to Delhi (January 1772) under Maratha protection 'his treasury was empty, his Crownlands were gone out of his possession, his palaces were stripped of their furniture, all the royal stores were exhausted, the public buildings were out of repair, and even the fort walls were cracked'. Moreover, he had run into heavy debt, the pay of his troops were in arrears, and he had committed himself to pay a large subsidy to the Marathas. He found an able officer in Mirza Najaf Khan, a Persian of remarkable military ability and political insight, who gradually 'established himself by sheer merit as the supreme guide of the State and the sole dominating figure on the political stage'.

In 1772 the imperial troops led by Mirza Najaf Khan and the Maratha army under Tukoji Holkar, Mahadji Sindhia and Visaji Krishna invaded the territory of Zabita Khan, the son and successor of Najibuddaula. The power of the Rohilla chief was seriously crippled. Rohilkhand was plundered, Hafiz Rahmat Khan and other Rohilla leaders were driven by this threat to the arms of Shujauddaula; the treaty which they made with him led to the Rohilla War of 1774. The Emperor and the Marathas quarrelled over the spoils. The result was a Maratha attack on Delhi. After the Emperor's submission the Marathas, joined by Mirza Najaf Khan, led an unsuccessful expedition to the Doab for occupation of Kora and Allahabad on the basis of a grant which they had secured from Shah Alam. They set out for the Deccan in May 1773. During the next decade they were involved to such an extent in internal quarrels and war with the English that they could not intervene in North Indian affairs.

Shah Alam lacked strength of character, energy, personal courage, and political acumen. Throughout his life he was under

the influence of favourites. After the departure of the Marathas Mirza Najaf Khan occupied the highest position in imperial administration, but he had a powerful rival in Abdul Ahad Khan. Mirza Najaf Khan raised a new army for the Emperor's service, and used it in several successful campaigns against the Jats, Zabita Khan and the Raja of Macheri (Alwar). Abdul Ahad Khan involved himself in the quarrels of the Sikhs and led an unsuccessful expedition to the Sirhind province (1779). Failure brought him down from power. Mirza Najaf Khan became the Regent (*wakil-i-mutlaq*) of the empire (November 1779). He held this position till his death two years later (April 1782). During this period he suffered from moral degeneration and lost that personal ability which had raised him to the pinnacle of success. The administration broke down; the treasury became empty. He is remembered as 'the last great Muslim minister of the Mughal throne'.

Mirza Najaf Khan's successors

During the years 1782-84 the imperial court was weakened by an unscrupulous struggle for power among four lieutenants of Mirza Najaf Khan: Afrasiyab Khan, Najaf Kuli Khan, Mirza Muhammad Shafi and Muhammad Beg Hamadani. They spent themselves by their internecine contests; Shafi and Afrasiyab sought Mahadji Sindhia's aid against Hamadani. After Afrasiyab's death Sindhia attacked and defeated Hamadani, who secured release from captivity by complete surrender. Shah Alam took refuge with Sindhia and conferred on him the *de facto* Regency of the empire (November 1784). The Peshwa was appointed the Emperor's deputy (*naib-i-munaib*) as well as commander-in-chief (*bakhshi-ul-mamalik*), subject to the written condition that Mahadji Sindhia and none else should be the permanent agent of the Peshwa in discharging the actual functions of these high offices.

James Browne in Delhi

Although Warren Hastings stopped payment of the Bengal tribute to Shah Alam and took away Kora and Allahabad from him, he did not ignore the political importance of the Mughal throne. He realized that the Emperor's sovereignty 'is universally admitted though the substance of it no longer exists'. In 1782 he thought it desirable to enter into relations with Delhi, and with that object he appointed Major James Browne to be his agent at the imperial capital. Browne was first to visit the

Nawab of Oudh and ascertain his views. His primary task was to secure information not only about Shah Alam's court but also about 'the independent chiefs and States whose territories bordered on his'. At Delhi Browne tried to weaken the pro-Maratha party and form a coalition of nobles in favour of an English alliance; but his diplomacy failed and his 'mission led to no action of any kind'.

Mahadji Sindhia's Regency

When Mahadji Sindhia took charge of the Regency Delhi and Agra were in occupation of Afrasiyab Khan's men, the imperial domains were not under imperial administration, his own debts amounted to eighty *lakhs*, and his large army called for heavy expenses. His chief asset was his legal right to occupy all the imperial forts, to receive payment of the fixed tributes from the vassal princes, and to take over the revenue collection of the Crownlands. 'Force alone could win for him what was his due by law'.

In 1785 Sindhia occupied the forts of Dig, Agra and Aligarh. With a view to prevent the Sikhs from threatening Delhi he entered into an agreement with them. He fought against the Khichis of Raghogarh in order to re-open the Deccan road, as also against the two Gosains—Umrao-gir and Himmat Bahadur—who were creating troubles in the Doab. An expedition to Bundelkhand yielded military success but no political result. Twice he invaded Jaipur (1786-87). During the second invasion Muhammad Beg Hamadani with his powerful army joined his enemies (1787). His retreat from Jaipur territory brought about the eclipse of his power (August 1787).

Dramatic developments took place during the next two years (1787-89). At first Sindhia suffered heavy reverses; he lost Agra city, Ajmer city, the whole of the Doab, and Aligarh. The recovery of the lost ground began with the defeat of Ismail Beg Hamadani at Agra (June 1788). Already Ghulam Kadir, the son and successor of Zabita Khan, had been appointed Regent by the Emperor (September 1787). A month later he turned against the Emperor. Ismail Beg joined him after his defeat at Agra. Shah Alam was deposed and blinded (July-August 1788). Torture and dishonour were inflicted on the imperial family. The imperial city was subjected to plunder and atrocities. This 'dance of demons' came to an end with Sindhia's occupation of Delhi (October 1788). Ghulam Kadir was put to death with torture (March 1789).

At the beginning of 1789 Sindhia was crippled by financial distress. Towards the middle of the year Tukoji Holkar reached Mathura and began to thwart him. 'The daily widening rift between the two most powerful Maratha leaders in Hindustan was utilized by the Rajput Rajas to delay, and finally to evade, the payment of their long-promised tribute'. So Sindhia decided on war. In 1790 he defeated Jaipur and Jodhpur at Patan and Merta; but the political effect of his victories was destroyed by Holkar's intrigue with the Rajput princes. Sindhia proceeded to the Deccan through Rajasthan, settling the disturbed government of Mewar on the way. He reached Poona in 1792, and never returned to North India.

End of Padshahi

Shah Alam—blind, ageing, enfeebled by opium—continued to spend his gloomy days in Delhi under the protection of Sindhia's army. By the treaty of Sarji Anjangaon (December 1803) concluded by Daulat Rao Sindhia after his defeat in the Second Anglo-Maratha War he renounced all claims upon the Emperor and engaged to interfere no further in his affairs. 'The blind old shadow on the throne of Aurangzib placed himself unreservedly under British protection'. The Governor-General, Lord Wellesley, made permanent provision for the support of the Emperor and his family. A small territory near the city of Delhi was set apart for this purpose; but within this area, as also in the city of Delhi outside the Red Fort, the administrative authority was vested in the British Resident. 'Henceforth the Padshah was neither the suzerain of the Company, nor the ally of the King of England and, therefore, his equal in international status. He was not even like one of the vassal princes who accepted British paramountcy and exercised internal sovereignty within well-defined territorial limits'. The Mughal Empire as a political institution died in 1803.

5. THE RAJPUTS

Jaipur

Madho Singh, who tried unsuccessfully to organize an anti-Maratha coalition after the third battle of Panipat, died in 1768 after a victory over the powerful Jat Raja, Jawahir Singh. His successor, Prithvi Singh, was a boy of five. During his brief reign of ten years the government was held by a regency. There were internal troubles caused by factional struggle for power.

by the rebellion of the Shekhawats, and the treachery of Pratap Singh Naruka, the vassal chief of Macheri (Alwar). But there was neither Maratha incursion nor Mughal interference.

The next ruler, Sawai Pratap Singh (1778-1803), ascended the throne as a minor. The State was torn by factional strife. The Raja was a brainless and violent debauch: 'Anticipating the decadent Nawabs of Oudh, he used to dress himself like a female, tie bells to his ankles and dance within the harem'. Continuous maladministration caused suffering to the people and alienated the nobles who were the pillars of the State.

Large amounts of tribute due to the Marathas and to the Emperor had not been paid for many years. Mahadji Sindhia invaded Jaipur in 1786 and made a settlement of the tribute. But Jaipur's evasive tactics provoked a second invasion (1787). Sawai Pratap Singh collected his feudal levies, Jodhpur sent two large contingents, and Muhammad Beg Hamadani deserted Sindhia to join Jaipur. The historic Lalsot campaign followed. A pitched battle was fought at Tunga (July 1787); it was indecisive. Sindhia retreated from Jaipur territory, and during the next year his power was eclipsed by the activities of Ismail Beg and Ghulam Kadir. He recovered his position as Regent of the empire after Ghulam Kadir's fall (October 1789). He was, however, crippled by financial distress and the opposition of Tukoji Holkar.

In 1790 Ismail Beg organized a coalition of Jaipur and Jodhpur against Sindhia. Mahadji faced the allied forces at Patan and won a complete victory (June 1790). But the coalition survived, and he advanced to invade Jodhpur territory. A decisive battle was fought at Merta, 'the gateway of Marwar, where every invader of the Rathor kingdom had been first opposed' (September 1790). De Boigne's battalions broke the reckless resistance of the Rajput cavalry. The Jodhpur Raja, Bijay Singh, surrendered Ajmer fort to Sindhia and expelled his ally Ismail Beg from his territory. The problem of Jaipur tribute was not settled till after Sindhia's departure for the Deccan and the victory of his troops over Holkar at Lakheri (June 1793). Thereafter 'Jaipur history entered on a placid uneventful course' till Sawai Pratap Singh's death in 1803.

Marwar

In Marwar the long reign of Bijay Singh (1752-93) was a period of civil war and breakdown of administration due to the factious nobles' struggle for power. The war of succession bet-

ween Bijay Singh and Ram Singh continued for two decades (1752-72). Most of the troublesome nobles were got rid of by treacherous murder. But the system of government could not acquire strength because Bijay Singh had a weak character. He allowed a female favourite to dominate the court and humiliate the nobles. In 1791, when Bijay Singh was very old, the female favourite selected one of his grandsons, Man Singh, as heir-designate; but the choice of the nobles fell upon another grandson, Bhim Singh. Murder and virtual anarchy followed. The realisation of tribute by the Marathas became impossible.

Mewar

Bhim Singh (1778-1828), 'weak in spirit and dull of intellect', was 'swayed by faction and intrigue'. A few years before his accession as a minor Sindhia and Ahalya Bai of Indore had taken away several *parganas* of Mewar. An unsuccessful attempt to recover these *parganas* was made after Mahadji Sindhia's retreat from Lalsot in 1787. Two powerful clans—the Chundawats and the Saktawats—fought for ascendancy within the State. Mahadji came to Mewar, suppressed the rebel nobles, and placed the administration of the State in the hands of his representative, Ambaji Ingle, who was to be supported by a Maratha army.

Ambaji Ingle governed Mewar for eight years (1791-99), and Tod has left for us a not wholly unfavourable impression about his administration. Mewar passed into the hands of Lakhwa Dada, Daulat Rao Sindhia's chief lieutenant in Hindustan, in 1799. He squeezed the Rana till his death in 1802. Meanwhile war had broken out between Daulat Rao Sindhia and Yashwant Rao Holkar. The latter plundered Mewar. The fortunes of Mewar were then entangled in the vicissitudes of the Second Anglo-Maratha War.

Decline of Rajputs

After the death of Ishwari Singh of Jaipur (1750) and Bakht Singh of Jodhpur (1752) 'the line of warrior Rajas ended, and the rulers of all the Rajput States in the second half of the eighteenth century were sometimes helpless minors, sometimes imbeciles, and often worthless drunkards and sensualists'. Their weakness promoted factional strife for power among the nobles. This led to Maratha intervention. The continuous pressure of the Marathas for monetary contributions drained the States dry.

Politically and economically weakened, the Rajputs found

that their traditional method of warfare was futile before fire arms. De Boigne's victories at Patan and Merta in 1790 proved that the Rajput cavalry was helpless before guns and muskets. The Rajput Rajas began to hire mercenaries, known by the general name 'Sindhis', who formed bands of infantry having a slight knowledge of European tactics. Even French mercenary captains were engaged and ordered to raise trained battalions. These measures did not add much to the fighting power of the Rajput armies, but army bills were inflated and economic crisis deepened.

The ruin of Rajasthan was accelerated by the moral decay of Rajput society. Licentiousness was widespread among the higher classes. Rigid social usages, such as insistence on family pride and female infanticide, promoted social decay. The habit of opium-eating hastened physical and mental degeneration.

6. THE JATS

Jawahir Singh

At the time of Suraj Mal's death (1763) the Jat Kingdom was the richest and strongest in Hindustan. His successor, Jawahir Singh (1763-68), started operations against Najibuddaula and attacked Delhi which Ahmad Shah Abdali had left in charge of that Rohilla chief. A settlement was made through the mediation of Malhar Rao Holkar (1764). In 1766 he was involved in a ruinous quarrel with the Marathas who supported Nahar Singh, his rival for the Jat throne. A quarrel also began with his nominal suzerain, Madho Singh of Jaipur. The Jaipur Raja was defeated at Maonda (1767); but the fortune of the Jats was shaken, and Madho Singh defeated them at Kama shortly afterwards (1768). Jawahir received military co-operation from the Cis-Sutlej Sikhs. He was murdered in 1768.

Jawahir Singh's successors

'Brain and character alike were wanting among the successors of Jawahir Singh'. The lack of a strong man at the head of the State let loose dissensions among the members of the royal family and encouraged opposition from the refractory vassals who had suffered in Jawahir's reign. Military weakness crept in. The ignorant Jat peasantry had lost the high level of efficiency in the indigenous style of fighting to which Suraj Mal had raised them; at the same time they failed to adopt the European discipline and tactics which they practised under the guidance

of Walter Reinhard (Samru) and Rene Medec. Both of them left the Jats to join the Emperor—the former in 1774 and the latter in 1772. Lack of able political and military leadership weakened the Jats in their confrontation with enemies.

Jawahir Singh's successor, Ratan Singh, was murdered within a few months of his accession (1768-69). Nawal Singh made himself regent for Ratan Singh's minor son, Kesari Singh. His position was challenged by his brother, Ranjit Singh, who invoked the aid of the Marathas. The army led by Ramchandra Ganesh and Visaji Krishna arrived in Hindustan early in 1770 and defeated Nawal Singh at Sonkh-Aring (April 1770). This was followed by two invasions of the Jat homeland by Mirza Najaf Khan (1773-74, 1775-76). The forts of Agra, Ramgarh (Aligarh) and Dig fell to the imperialists. In the meanwhile Nawal Singh had died (1775), the nominal regency had come to an end, and Ranjit Singh had occupied the throne. His attempt to win back his father's domains in the Agra-Mathura region provoked a fresh imperialist invasion led by Mirza Najaf Khan (1777-78). After the fall of his forts Ranjit Singh sued for terms. Mirza Najaf Khan restored to him the Bharatpur region with a revenue of seven *lakhs* only. Thus the three campaigns of the imperialists 'ended in unmitigated disaster for the house that Suraj Mal had raised to supreme eminence in Hindustan'. Ranjit Singh involved himself in the Second Anglo-Maratha War. He died in 1805.

7. THE SIKHS

Misls

Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded the Punjab for the last time in 1767. On his death (1772) he was succeeded by his son Timur Shah (1772-93) who did not vigorously pursue the policy of attempting to subdue the Sikhs. Within a few years after 1767 the Sikhs practically established their power from Saharanpur in the east to Attock in the west, from Multan in the south to Kangra and Jammu in the north. The firm establishment of their authority in the Punjab is proved by the uninterrupted issue of their coins from 1765.

The spirit of equality which was inherent in the Sikh society, as also the history of the Sikh War of Independence which had been fought under co-operative leadership, precluded the possibility of the rise of a single monarchical organization. In the

seventies of the eighteenth century the Sikhs formed themselves into twelve *Misls* (confederacies): (1) The *Bhangis* ruled the territory from Lahore and Amritsar up to Jammu in the north, Gujarat in the north-west, and Multan in the south. (2) The *Ahluwalias* held the Jalandhar Doab, with head-quarters at Kapurthala. (3) The *Fyzullapurias*. (4) The *Ramgarhias*. (5) The *Kanheyas* occupied the Pathankot-Jammu-Kangra region. (6) The *Sukerchakias* occupied the Sialkot-Gujarat area and extended their boundary to Attock. (7) The *Nakkais* held the region to the south-west of Lahore bordering on Multan. (8) The *Dalewalias* derived the name of their *Misl* from the village Dalewal on the Ravi. (9) The *Karora Singhias* held territories in the Cis-Sutlej region as also in the Jalandhar Doab. (10) The *Shahid* or *Nihang Misl* held territories in the Cis-Sutlej region. (11) The *Nishanwalas* were standard-bearers of the *Dal Khalsa* and had their headquarters at Ambala. (12) The *Phulkias* of Patiala, Nabha, Jhind and Kythal formed the most important of the Cis-Sutlej chiefs. There were several other minor *Misls*.

Inter-Misl struggle

In 1784 the French general Bussy wrote: 'The Sikhs are masters of the country which lies between Delhi and the empire of Persia'. This extensive country was held by 'self-seeking, fierce Sikh barons' whose principal objective was the extension of dominions at the cost of their neighbours. The disappearance of the external danger—the fear of Afghan invasion—loosened the bonds of unity which had been forged during the long struggle against the Mughals and the Afghans.

The Bhangis, the Kanheyas and the Sukerchakias came into prominence during the last three decades of the eighteenth century. The Bhangis at one time appeared likely to bring the whole of the trans-Sutlej Punjab under their sway; but the occupation of Multan by Timur Shah (1780), the premature death of their leaders (Hari Singh, Ganda Singh and Jhanda Singh), and the rise of able leaders among the Kanheyas (Jai Singh) and the Sukerchakias (Chharat Singh and his son Maha Singh) contributed to their decline. The trans-Sutlej region attained political unity in the early years of the nineteenth century under the chief of the Sukerchakia *Misl*, Ranjit Singh.

Political system

The political system of the Sikhs during the *Misl* period has been described as 'theocratic confederate feudalism'. The

term 'aristocratical republic' has been applied to the Sikh principalities.

'Every *zamindar* (i.e., yeoman farmer)', says a contemporary European officer, Major Polier, 'who, from Attock to Hansi Hisar ... can command from ten followers on horseback to upwards, sets up immediately as a Sikh *sardar*; and, as far as in his power, aggrandizes himself at the cost of his weaker neighbours'. The separate territorial units which originated in this way came under a very loose central organization in which there were elements of theocracy, feudalism and brotherhood.

Twice a year—on the occasion of the *Baisakhi* and the *Dewali*—the Sikhs met at Amritsar in an assembly known as the *Sarbat Khalsa*. It was summoned by the Akalis. A leader was chosen by a majority of votes, but during the period of his temporary elevation he acted simply as the 'first among equals' (*primus inter pares*). The confederacy was called *Khalsaji* and the grand army was called *Dal Khalsaji*. Polier says: 'An equality of rank is maintained in their civil society, which no class of men, however wealthy or powerful, is suffered to break down'. As a consequence, every one could freely express his opinion in the meetings of the *Sarbat Khalsa* and decisions were taken by a majority of votes. The aristocratic element was represented by the prominent role played by the chiefs, but it meant no deviation from the principle of equality. The decisions related to important expeditions and matters of general concern. The resolutions passed in the presence of the holy scripture (*Granth Sahib*) were known as *Gurmatta*. It was believed that the deliberations of the *Sarbat Khalsa* were held under the inspiration of God. The last session of the assembly was held in 1805 after the establishment of the Sikh monarchy by Ranjit Singh.

Every *Misl* was a component part of the confederation, bound by the resolutions of the *Sarbat Khalsa*. Apart from general matters covered by these resolutions, every *Misl* was an independent unit under a chief. Within a *Misl* there was subdivision of lands and authority among individuals (*Misldars*) who, despite their formal subordination to the chief, acted independently within their own sphere. The principal obligation of the latter was military service. This was a peculiar type of feudalism. It was different from European feudalism, for it was not associated with an elaborate system of feudal obligations. The Sikh commitment to the principle of equality prevented the rise of a haughty nobility. It was fundamentally different

also from Rajput feudalism. In Rajasthan the chiefs were divided into grades, and they based their rights on their kinship with the ruling prince. The Sikh system had no room for such hierarchical or patriarchal ideas.

The struggle for supremacy among the *Misls* was certain, sooner or later, to lead either to conquest by a foreign power or to the consolidation of the *Misls* in a military monarchy. The Afghans under Timur Shah and his successor, Zaman Shah, were not strong enough to repeat the exploits of Ahmad Shah Abdali. The English, who advanced to the Delhi-Agra region in 1803, had not contemplated the extension of their influence to the Punjab in the eighteenth century. Warren Hastings recognized the potentiality of the political and military power of the Sikhs, but he hoped that Mahadji Sindhia, who dominated the Delhi-Agra region, would be able to keep them in check. He was, however, shrewd enough to anticipate in 1784 the rise of a military monarchy in the Punjab. The 'primitive defects' of the *Misl* system, he observed, would provide 'the gradual and easy means by which the whole might be enveloped' by 'one man of superior capacity and enterprise ... within his own supremacy'. Such a man the Sikhs found in Ranjit Singh. Forster, an English traveller, expressed the same idea about the same time: 'We may see some ambitious chief, led on by his genius and success, and, absorbing the power of his associates, display from the ruins of their commonwealth, the standard of monarchy'.

Military system

During the *Misl* period the Sikh army, which was fairly big in size, consisted largely of cavalry; the infantry was held in low estimation. According to different estimates the numerical strength of the cavalry ranged between 73,000 and 50,000. The Punjab was an excellent breeding ground for horses, and the Sikh warriors were good horsemen. They were usually armed with a spear, a matchlock and a sabre. Artillery was introduced later by Ranjit Singh. Naturally the soldiers of the *Misls* avoided pitched battles; their usual tactics was to wear out the enemy by continuous skirmish, to draw him into the snare by calculated flights, and then to overwhelm him by sudden attack. They knew the ground, the forests and the hills provided safe lines of retreat, and their swift cavalry could command the communications. No spectacular victory was possible, but practical military results were comparatively easy to achieve.

Timur Shah and Zaman Shah

Ahmad Shah Abdali's successors found it difficult to accept the establishment of Sikh sovereignty in the Punjab as an accomplished fact. Timur Shah occupied Multan from the Sikhs (1780). He also reduced the Muslim chief of Bahawalpur and the Talpur Amirs of Sind to submission. He led campaigns in the Khyber region and Kashmir. Unwilling to advance into the Punjab where the Sikhs were strongly entrenched, he aimed at consolidating his hold on the borderland—on the north, west and south—and preventing further expansion of the Sikh power.

His son and successor, Zaman Shah (1793-99), adopted a more vigorous policy: he was not prepared to leave the Punjab to the Sikhs. After suppressing a rebellion in Kashmir and compelling the Amirs of Sind to pay tribute, he advanced to Rohtas; but a revolt in Afghanistan necessitated retreat. He came back in 1796-97 and occupied Lahore. Recalled once again to Afghanistan by a rebellion, he returned in 1798 and reoccupied Lahore which had meanwhile fallen into the hands of the Sikhs. A Persian invasion of Afghanistan again dragged him to his own country where he was defeated and blinded by his brother Mahmud (1799). His 'ill directed and ill timed attempts at Indian conquest' were 'empty schemes of ambition'.

Cis-Sutlej Sikhs

Owing to geographical proximity to the Delhi-Agra-upper Doab region the Cis-Sutlej Sikhs were drawn through their depredations into contact with the ruling powers in that region. They carried on almost annual raids into the country ruled by Najibuddaula. After his death (1770) they had to deal with the representatives of the decadent Mughal power such as Mirza Najaf Khan and Mahadji Sindhia. George Thomas diverted their attention from the offensive to the defensive. They were at a disadvantage because they had no political unity. Amar Singh of Patiala might have united them under his rule; but his death in 1781 and the weakness of his successor Sahib Singh ruined this prospect.

Unable to resist the incursions of the Cis-Sutlej Sikhs, Mahadji Sindhia concluded a treaty of alliance with them in 1785. But the Sikhs did not stop their depredations, and Sikh-Maratha hostilities continued. Under Mahadji's successor, Daulat Rao Sindhia, De Boigne, and after him Perron, managed Maratha affairs in the Delhi region. Their trained battalions

kept the Sikh raiders in check. They found another powerful opponent in George Thomas. The Second Anglo-Maratha War changed the political situation in the Cis-Sutlej region.

George Thomas

Several European military adventurers made colossal fortunes by serving as commanders in the armies of the Indian princes, particularly the Sindhias. De Boigne, who served under Mahadji Sindhia and Daulat Rao Sindhia for seven years (1789-95), amassed 32 *lakhs*. Perron, who also served the Sindhias from 1790 to 1803, piled up 135 *lakhs*. He played an important role in Cis-Sutlej politics. Louis Bourquien, also in Sindhia's service, carried away 'an immense fortune' in 1804. Walter Reinhard (Samru), who served the Jats at first and then seceded to the Emperor (1774), and his widow, Begam Samru, maintained a large body of foreigner-trained sepoys. Rene Medec, who also served the Jats at first and then seceded to the Emperor (1772), carried to France enough wealth to purchase the rank of a noble and some landed estates.

Another European military adventurer, George Thomas, made himself an independent ruler in Hariyana. An Irishman by birth, he reached India in 1782 and joined Begam Samru's European corps in 1787. Then he found employment (1793) under the Maratha governor of the Mewat region. At the next stage of his career he was 'a private robber-captain' fighting for his living in the Hariyana region with his headquarters at Hansi (1798). He fought against the Cis-Sutlej Sikhs and intervened in the internal disputes in the Patiala State. He antagonised Perron, Daulat Rao Sindhia's supreme commander in North India, who found in the Irish adventurer an obstacle to the consolidation of his own ascendancy in the Cis-Sutlej region. Defeated by Perron's troops and their Sikh allies (1801), Thomas retired to British territory and died in Bengal (1802).

SOUTH INDIA

I. PESHWA MADHAV RAO I (1761-72)

War with the Nizam

After the death of Balaji Baji Rao (June 1761) his second son Madhav Rao, who was then in his seventeenth year, was installed as Peshwa at Poona, for his elder brother Vishwas Rao had fallen at Panipat. His uncle Raghunath Rao, who had led several expeditions to North India, became his guardian and regent. The *de facto* headship of the Maratha Empire did not satisfy this ambitious man; his political aspirations prepared the ground for unmitigated disasters.

The first crisis which the new Government had to meet arose from the attempt of Nizam Ali, who had wrested power at Hyderabad from his elder brother Salabat Jang, to reverse the terms of the treaty imposed by the Marathas after the battle of Udgir. When the Nizam's invasion was imminent Raghunath concluded an agreement with the English at Bombay (September 1761); the Marathas made substantial concessions, but received nothing in return. The English, strengthened by their victories in Karnatak as also in Bengal, sought to exploit the difficulties of the Marathas. They demanded the cession of Salsette and Bassein in return for military assistance. The Marathas were able to repulse the Nizam's invasion without such assistance.

The first battle between the Nizam and the Marathas (January 1762) ended in his clear defeat. But Raghunath did not take this opportunity of crushing the power of the Nizam; on the other hand, he conciliated the defeated enemy by granting him very favourable terms. He was already contemplating a struggle for power with the minor Peshwa in which the Nizam's goodwill was likely to be helpful for him.

The peace with the Nizam was followed by the first Karnatak expedition (1762). Dissensions broke out between Raghunath and the Peshwa. An open struggle followed; the Peshwa's army was defeated in two battles (November 1762). A reconciliation followed; once more Raghunath became the *de facto* ruler of the State. He tried to win over the Nizam by surrendering several districts including the forts of Daulatabad, Shivneri, Asirgarh and Ahmadnagar.

Lured by Janoji Bhonsle of Nagpur who nourished the absurd ambition of being made regent for the phantom King of Satara, Nizam Ali advanced into the heartland of Maharashtra and plundered Poona (May 1763). Avoiding open engagements, Madhav Rao plundered the territories of Janoji Bhonsle and Nizam Ali. A portion of Nizam Ali's army was defeated at Rakshasbhuvan (August 1763). He made peace by agreeing to surrender territories worth 82 *lakhs*. This treaty proclaimed the first recovery of Maratha power after the disaster of Panipat. In domestic affairs it marked the end of Raghunath's regency.

Rebellions of Janoji Bhonsle and Raghunath Rao

Janoji intrigued with Haidar Ali of Mysore and encouraged Raghunath's ambitious project of capturing power. Madhav Rao concluded an alliance with Nizam Ali, promising him cession of some territories at Janoji's cost. Threatened simultaneously by the Peshwa and the Nizam, Janoji concluded peace (1765). The larger portion of the territories surrendered by him was to be given to the Nizam.

Raghunath co-operated with the Peshwa in the expedition against Janoji. After the restoration of peace he led an expedition to North India. On return to the Deccan he began to make preparations for another open contest with the Peshwa (1767). He carried on negotiations with Nizam Ali, Haidar Ali, Janoji Bhonsle and Damaji Gaikwar. His friendship was sought by the Bombay Government's envoy Mostyn who came to Poona (1767) to ask for the Peshwa's assistance against Haidar Ali in the First Anglo-Mysore War. The situation affected Madhav Rao's policies in different directions. He could not take advantage of the war of the English against Haidar Ali to increase Maratha influence in Karnatak. He had to conciliate the Nizam. He had to give up his project of attacking the Sidis of Janjira. He had to postpone his plan of sending an expedition to North India. All his resources had to be mobilised for civil war.

Counting upon the support of Janoji Bhonsle, Raghunath marched to Dhodap, a fort in the Chandor range. There he was decisively defeated by the Peshwa (June 1768). He was kept in confinement at Poona. The Peshwa, aided by the Nizam, plundered Nagpur and ravaged Berar. Janoji concluded peace at Kanakapur (March 1769), surrendering territories worth 8 *lakhs* and promising to perform the duties of a loyal vassal.

Rise of Haidar Ali.

The small principality of Mysore, ruled by the Wodiyar dynasty from the fourteenth century, passed through an internal political transformation in 1731-34. Two brothers, Devaraj and Nanjaraj, seized power and reduced the King to a position similar to that assigned later to the Maratha King Ram Raja. The former was the *dalwai* (commander-in-chief) and the latter was the *sarvadhikari* (controller of revenue and finance). From 1746 Devaraj, grown old, allowed Nanjaraj to lead distant expeditions.

Between 1749-60 a young horseman named Haidar Naik rose into prominence in the service of Nanjaraj. In the fifties Mysore was involved in the conflict between the Marathas and the Nizam as also in the Anglo-French struggle. The heavy expenses of military operations reduced the State to bankruptcy in 1755, and it became practically impossible to pay the army. Haidar was appointed *faujdar* of the rock fort of Dindigul, where he consolidated his position in 1755-57. As a result of disputes between Devaraj and Nanjaraj the latter became the sole ruler of the State. He failed to meet the crisis arising out of the Maratha invasions of 1757 and 1758. Haidar took charge of the field army and made a settlement with the Marathas. Then he ousted Nanjaraj from power with the assistance of his *dewan* Khande Rao and the connivance of the nominal King. The King and Khande Rao soon found that they had only exchanged one master for another. Khande Rao came to an understanding with the Marathas under Visaji Krishna, and Haidar was reduced to a desperate position. There was a sudden change in the situation when Visaji Krishna retreated because the Marathas were called upon to meet Ahmad Shah Abdali's challenge in North India. Haidar secured the submission of the King as also of Khande Rao. He became the undisputed master of the Mysore State.

Haidar had learnt his lessons in the art of war while fighting under Nanjaraj in the siege of Trichinopoly. He had understood the niceties of the western methods of drill, discipline, attack and defence as an eye-witness of the Anglo-French operations at Trichinopoly. He utilized this experience as also his political skill in extending the boundaries of the kingdom which he had usurped. Between 1761 and 1762 he conquered Hoskote, Dod Ballapur, and Sira with its dependencies. He also subjugated the *poligars* of Chik Ballapur and Raidurg.

He occupied Kodikonda, Penukonda, Madaksira, Harpanhalli and Chitaldurg.

Madhav Rao and Haidar Ali (1762-5)

Haidar's early successes were possible because the Maratha power had been temporarily immobilised by the disaster at Panipat. In his attempt to push his frontier towards the Krishna he found an ally in Basalat Jang, Nizam Ali's disappointed brother, whose ambition was the establishment of an independent principality in Karnatak. His aggressions in Karnatak deprived Poona of tribute amounting to 50 lakhs.

After the conclusion of peace with Nizam Ali (January 1762) Madhav Rao, accompanied by Raghunath Rao, led an expedition to Karnatak. Tribute was realised from several districts, including Kittur and Bidnur. Instead of confronting the Marathas Haidar retreated to a forest. Scarcity of provisions, want of money and dissensions at home forced the Peshwa to retreat to Poona without achieving any definite result.

While the Marathas were paralysed by internal strife and Nizam Ali's second invasion (1763) Haidar occupied Bidnur, Sonda, Ratehalli, Bankapur, Shirhati and Dharwar. The Nawab of Savanur, whose territory lay in the direct line of Maratha armies proceeding to Mysore, was compelled to recognize his suzerainty. The frontier of Mysore was pushed nearly to the banks of the Krishna.

Madhav Rao's second Karnatak campaign (1764-65) began after his victory over Nizam Ali at Rakshasbhuvan. He secured the allegiance of the Nawab of Savanur and crossed the Tungabhadra. Haidar took shelter in the forests near Ratehalli; but he was drawn out of his retreat and severely defeated by the Marathas (May 1764). Anxious to avoid another open contest, he took shelter in the entrenched fort at Anavati. But he suffered another severe defeat at the battle of Jadi Anavati (December 1764). He shut himself up at Bidnur. He was in a very difficult position, but the Peshwa also had serious troubles. Nizam Ali was plundering Maratha territory, and the English merchants of Bombay were creating troubles in the Konkan. Both sides were ready for peace; Raghunath Rao intervened, and an agreement was concluded (March 1765). Haidar surrendered several districts, including Bankapur, gave up all claims on the Nawab of Savanur, and agreed to pay 30 lakhs as tribute. This was 'an adjustment of extreme moderation, considering the circumstances in which Haidar was placed'. The responsibility of show-

ing such generosity to Haidar lies wholly on Raghunath Rao whose purpose was to win over this powerful enemy in view of his plan to fight for power against the Peshwa. The treaty contained 'some secret articles which were the foundation of that good understanding which ever afterwards subsisted' between Raghunath and Haidar Ali.

Madhav Rao and Haidar Ali (1766-67)

Madhav Rao did not accept the result of this expedition as final. Anxious to resume operations against Haidar, he secured the safety of his rear by reaching an understanding with Nizam Ali about co-operation in war against Haidar Ali. The price he paid was cession of territories worth 15 lakhs. Haidar also tried to strengthen himself in anticipation of renewal of struggle with the Marathas. The Bombay Government proposed a treaty of peace and friendship (1766), but the Court of Directors was then unwilling to become 'involved in hostilities, especially as principals, in any case short of defence'. Moreover, the Company was anxious to secure control over the 'Northern Sarkars', and for this purpose an alliance with the Nizam was necessary. So General Caillaud concluded a treaty with Nizam Ali, which indirectly provided for the employment of English auxiliary troops in his impending war against Haidar Ali (November 1766).

This was the background of Madhav Rao's third Karnatak expedition (1767). Haidar Ali had begun ravaging Maratha territory in Karnatak before the Peshwa crossed the Krishna (January 1767). The Marathas occupied several important posts. Haidar fortified Bangalore, Sira and Bidnur and shut himself up with his army at Seringapatam. Unwilling to engage in pitched battles, he devastated his own territory, so that the Marathas suffered from scarcity of food and water. The Peshwa occupied Sira, the fort of Madgiri and several important places. The Nizam began to advance to join the Peshwa. Haidar pressed for peace. The Peshwa had no money to meet the expenses of the camp, and no boats to cross the rivers in the impending rainy season. Moreover, he was unwilling to give the Nizam a share of the spoils of victories to which he had contributed nothing.

By the terms of the treaty (May 1767) the Peshwa retained Chennarayadurg, Madgiri, Dod Ballapur, Hoskote and Sira. Kolar, Chik Ballapur and Nandigarh were to be returned to

Haidar. He agreed to pay 31 *lakhs* to the Peshwa and 18 *lakhs* to the Nizam ; but probably these amounts were never paid.

First Anglo-Mysore War (1767-69)

Haidar Ali gave the French some help in the last phase of the Anglo-French struggle because he expected their support in his usurpation of power. The English alienated him by their negotiations with the King of Mysore and Khande Rao when he was fighting against them. He employed French officers like Chevalier Du Mouhy and De La Tour in his service. He gave shelter to Mahfuz Khan, the elder brother of Nawab Muhammad Ali of Arcot, who was an ally of the Company. He entertained in his service Raza Saheb, son of Chanda Saheb who had contested Muhammad Ali's claim to the throne of Arcot. There were territorial disputes between Arcot and Mysore. By extending his conquest to the Malabar coast he came into contact with the English factories there.

These were not sufficient causes of an Anglo-Mysore war. It was Caillaud's treaty with the Nizam (November 1766) which proved to Haidar that the English had positively hostile intentions. The Nizam, who was dissatisfied with the terms of the Peshwa's treaty with Haidar Ali in May 1765, accompanied by an English detachment, entered Mysore in April 1767. But he reached a secret understanding with Haidar Ali and soon broke with the English, leaving them to encounter the full brunt of the Mysorean attack. The Peshwa, courted by the English and Muhammad Ali on the one side, and by Nizam Ali and Haidar Ali on the other, remained neutral.

The battle of Changama gave Colonel Smith an indecisive victory over the allied forces of Haidar Ali and Nizam Ali. They were defeated next at Trinomali. The Nizam now withdrew from the conflict, but Haidar continued to maintain his offensive. He could not win the battles of Vaniambadi, Mulbagal and Ariyalur ; but the English failed to rout him. Meanwhile the Nizam made peace with the English (February 1768) 'in the same irresponsible manner as he had broken with them'. This made little difference to the course of the war. The territories of the Nawab of Arcot remained open to the ravages of Haidar's cavalry which had remarkable mobility. Apart from the purely military impact of the cavalry raids, 'the principal sources of English finance were dried up'. In March 1769 Haidar appeared before Madras at the head of a body of cavalry. The panic-stricken Madras Government (which was primarily res-

possible for the conduct of the war on the English side) concluded a treaty (April 1769) that provided for mutual restitution of conquests and a defensive alliance. The general conduct of the war on the English side was 'incompetent'; it was marked by 'tactical success and strategic failure'. The Court of Directors held that the Company's interest and influence suffered much as a result of the war and the treaty that ended it.

English embassy to Poona (1767-68)

After the outbreak of the First Anglo-Mysore War the Bombay Government sent to Poona an envoy named Thomas Mostyn for the purpose of preventing the Peshwa from joining Haidar Ali and Nizam Ali (November 1767). He was also advised to take full advantage of the quarrel between the Peshwa and Raghunath Rao and to 'encourage any advances' which might be made by the latter. Mostyn remained at Poona for about three months and had several interviews with the Peshwa. The Peshwa also received an agent from the Nawab of Arcot, communicating the Madras Government's proposal asking for Maratha military assistance or at least neutrality. Mostyn carried on negotiations with Raghunath who asked for English assistance against the Peshwa.

The English realised the Peshwa's weakness and refused to make concessions. He could neither get money from Haidar Ali by assisting him, nor acquire territory by joining him. He failed to exploit the war for the advantage of the Maratha State because he was not in a position to take any decisive step. Raghunath was preparing for civil war, Janoji Bhonsle entertained unpatriotic ambition, and the Jats and the Rajputs were creating troubles in North India. These difficulties, coupled with the unsatisfactory state of the Peshwa's finances, forced upon him a policy of barren neutrality.

Madhav Rao and Haidar Ali (1769-72)

On the conclusion of peace with Janoji Bhonsle (March 1769) the Peshwa decided to lead another expedition against Haidar Ali. The latter did not pay the arrears of the tribute promised in 1767; on the other hand, he levied contributions on places and chiefs within the Maratha sphere and entered into a secret understanding with the Nawab of Savanur. Moreover, he instigated Raghunath and Janoji Bhonsle to rise against the Peshwa.

Determined to take strong measures for the complete subjugation of Karnatak, Madhav Rao marched from Poona

directly towards Seringapatam (October 1769). The Maratha army proceeding to Karnatak consisted of about 75,000 troops and had 50 guns. The English suspected that the Peshwa's 'designs are not confined to the mere collection of *chauth* but extend to the subjection of the whole peninsula'.

In the early months of 1770 the Peshwa occupied several important posts. Haidar refused to confront him in the open field; he 'did homage' to the 'military talents' of Madhav Rao. He followed his old plan of devastating his own territory. He took shelter for sometime in the forest of Udagani. Then he marched to Seringapatam, after having inflicted a defeat on the Marathas on the way. At Seringapatam he collected all his treasures from other forts. Provisions for several years were laid up there. Abundant water was available from the Kaveri which ran close by the walls; the fort was located in an island.

Towards the middle of 1770 the Peshwa started for Poona, for his health was gradually giving way. A large army was left behind, and Trimbak Rao was placed in charge of the operations. For two years he fought against Haidar Ali. The Marathas secured a decisive victory at Moti Talav, near Seringapatam city, in March 1771. But they unwisely allowed the remnant of the defeated army to reach Seringapatam and gave Haidar a few days' time to complete his arrangements for the defence of the capital. After an unsuccessful attempt to capture the fort of Seringapatam by siege Trimbak Rao advanced towards Tanjore in response to an appeal for help against the Nawab of Arcot from the Maratha ruler of that principality. Six months' time was wasted in this diversionary expedition. Early in 1772 Trimbak Rao resumed operations against Haidar Ali; but he had to make a hasty peace, for the Peshwa's illness had become serious and the Poona treasury was exhausted. Haidar shrewdly took advantage of the weakness of the Marathas. He had to give up several important posts such as Sira, Madgiri, Gurrumkonda, Dod Ballapur, Kolar and Hoskote with their dependencies. He retained Nandigarh, Chick Ballapur, Devarayadurg and some other places. He paid 31 lakhs and promised to pay 19 lakhs more in three years. The Maratha army began its march to Poona in June 1772.

Madhav Rao's last Karnatak expedition had limited success. Haidar Ali's northern boundary was reduced within narrower limits than those of the Hindu Kingdom of Mysore at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Greater success could

have been won if illness had not forced the Peshwa's retreat to Poona, and if Trimbak Rao had not failed to exploit the situation arising out of the battle of Moti Talav.

The English played an indecisive part in this phase of Maratha-Mysore struggle. At the beginning of the hostilities both parties applied for assistance to the Madras Government. Haidar appealed to that clause in his treaty of 1769 which provided that if either party was attacked by a third party, both parties would 'mutually assist each other to drive the enemy out'. This clause bound the Madras Government to assist Haidar Ali; but they remained neutral because they wanted to maintain a balance of power in Karnatak. This infringement of the treaty by the English estranged Haidar Ali, but it did not conciliate the Marathas.

Madhav Rao: estimate

Madhav Rao died a premature death (November 1772). He was sincerely devoted to religious observances and averse to luxury. All authorities agree in describing him as a great administrator. 'He had to contend with violent prejudices, and with general corruption'. Moreover, his reign was too brief and too full of political troubles to afford opportunities for institutional changes. So he tried to make the existing machinery work well, and for this purpose he took infinite pains in the midst of his political and military preoccupations. Unlike some of his contemporaries, he was never guilty of treachery towards any friend or foe. Within a brief period of less than eleven years he extended his authority from Delhi to the Kaveri. Haidar Ali, whose military genius was a terror to the British generals, was defeated in all the campaigns led by him. These exploits synchronized with the suppression of serious internal revolts and a minute supervision of administrative details. It is interesting to speculate whether such a gifted ruler, had he been blessed with a longer life, could have averted the downfall of the Maratha Empire.

2. FIRST ANGLO-MARATHA WAR (1775-82)

Peshwa Narayan Rao (1772-73)

The battle of Panipat, it has been said, was scarcely more fatal to the solidarity of the Maratha Empire than the early death of Madhav Rao. 'His death swept away the only barrier which restrained the floods of political intrigue, and they now

rushed forward to undermine what was left of the foundations of Maratha ascendancy laid by the great Shivaji'.

As Madhav Rao was childless, he was succeeded by his younger brother Narayan Rao, a weak and fickle-minded young man seventeen years old. The government was placed in the hands of Sakharam Bapu and Nana Fadnavis, the two ablest and most experienced servants of the State. Raghunath Rao, who had escaped from confinement before Madhav Rao's death, was placed under restraint again soon after the accession of the new Peshwa.

In August 1773 Narayan Rao was murdered in his palace by some rebellious troops of the Peshwa's infantry. The extent of Raghunath Rao's complicity in this political tragedy is a matter of debate. He was certainly cognisant of the rising even if he did not actually instigate it. But probably he wanted the Peshwa's confinement only, and the murder was due to the 'sinister intervention' of his wife Anandi Bai. There is no doubt that Raghunath's guilty ambition to usurp the Peshwaship was the root cause of the incident. Chief Justice Ram Shastri held an enquiry and found the ambitious uncle the main culprit.

Peshwa Raghunath Rao (1773-74)

Long years of intrigue and rebellion, culminating in a heinous crime, brought Raghunath to the Peshwa's *gadi*. As he was the only surviving male member of Baji Rao's family, his claim could no longer be challenged. But there was sullen resentment on all sides; Sakharam Bapu and Nana Fadnavis abstained from co-operation with him. Soon afterwards a secret alliance of influential Maratha officers and chiefs was organized to oust Raghunath from the *gadi*. The alliance, which later came to be termed the 'Council of *Barbhais*', was joined by Sakharam Bapu, Nana Fadnavis, Haripant Phadke, Trimbak Rao Pethe, Moroba Fadnavis, Babuji Naik and others. Mahadji Sindhia and Tukoji Holkar came in shortly afterwards.

The *Barbhais* openly declared their purpose through a proclamation issued in the name of the Chhatrapati, deposing Raghunath and asking all Maratha chiefs to withdraw their allegiance from him (February 1774). They also launched armed hostilities. Trimbak Rao Pethe led their forces against Raghunath, but he was routed and killed (March 1774). Three weeks later Ganga Bai, Narayan Rao's widow, gave birth to a posthumous son (April 1774). Raghunath lost his right to Peshwa-

ship. The Chhatrapati granted the robes of Peshwaship to the infant who was named Sawai Madhav Rao (Madhav Rao Narayan). The desperate usurper suffered a crushing defeat at Adas (February 1775) and fled to Surat where he sought the protection of the English (March 1775).

Treaty of Surat (1775)

For many years the Bombay Government had been trying to acquire Bassein, Salsette and the islands of Bombay harbour. Thomas Mostyn, during his first embassy to Poona (1767-68), had asked for Bassein and Salsette in return for English aid to the Peshwa against Haidar Ali. He came again to Poona after Madhav Rao's death and stayed there for full two years, watching the course of events and encouraging Raghunath in his projects. When the *Barbhais* were fighting against Raghunath the Bombay Government occupied Thana by a surprise attack (December 1774) on the plea that the Portuguese were about to attempt to recover Bassein. Thana was the key to Salsette, and the Portuguese occupation of Salsette might obstruct English trade. This plea did not satisfy the Supreme Government in Calcutta. However, Raghunath's appeal for aid after his defeat at Adas brought to the English an unforeseen opportunity.

Raghunath's treaty with the Bombay Government (treaty of Surat, March 1775) contained four provisions relating to the current situation. First, the English would assist Raghunath with a force of 2,500 men. Second, he would defray the cost of the English force and undertake not to side with the enemies of the Company. Third, Salsette, Bassein and the islands were to be ceded in perpetuity with a share of the revenues of the Broach and Surat districts in Gujarat. Fourth, any peace made by Raghunath with Poona was to include the English.

The English had completed their military arrangements even before the finalisation of the treaty. Colonel Keating defeated the Poona Government's army at Adas (May 1775). This victory had an important political result in Gujarat: it led Fateh Singh Gaikwar to make an alliance with the English. About the same time the Maratha fleet was destroyed by the English. The situation was now definitely in Raghunath's favour, but it was suddenly changed by the action of the Supreme Government in Calcutta.

Intervention of Warren Hastings

Till the passing of the Regulating Act (1773) by the British Parliament the three Presidencies—Madras, Bombay, Calcutta

—acted independently in commercial as also political matters within their respective zones, subject to general control by the Court of Directors in London. Mutual co-operation depended upon changing circumstances and particular instructions from London. The Regulating Act made a half-hearted attempt to create a central authority. The Governor of Bengal was given an undefined superior status: he received the designation of Governor-General of Bengal. It was provided that the Governments (Governors and Councils) of Madras and Bombay would no longer be entitled to make war or conclude a treaty without the previous 'consent and approbation' of the Governor-General and Council of Bengal. This limitation, however, was not applicable to two types of cases: (1) 'such cases of imminent necessity as would render it dangerous to postpone such hostilities or treaties until the orders from the Governor-General and Council might arrive'; (2) cases in which Madras and Bombay received 'special orders' from the Court of Directors. These restrictions left room for differences of opinion and conflicting actions. This difficulty was brought into clear relief in the case of the First Anglo-Maratha War and then in the case of the Second Anglo-Mysore War.

The Governor-General and Council of Bengal, constituted under the Regulating Act, took office in October 1774. Warren Hastings, who joined as Governor in April 1772, now became Governor-General. The occupation of Thana was effected, and the treaty of Surat was concluded, without the previous 'consent and approbation' of the Supreme or Bengal Government. In the case of Thana the plea of 'imminent necessity' might have some relevance; but the treaty was, in the opinion of Warren Hastings, 'unauthorised because it was expressly contrary to the Act of Parliament'.

Treaty of Purandhar (1776)

In May 1775 the Supreme Government directed the Bombay Government to withdraw the Company's forces from hostilities in support of Raghunath Rao. They also sent Colonel Upton to Purandhar to negotiate with the Poona Government (the ministers, led by Sakharam Bapu, who were managing affairs in the name of the infant Peshwa). After protracted negotiations the treaty of Purandhar was signed in March 1776. It provided for the establishment of a general peace between the English and the Marathas on the following conditions: (1) The treaty of Surat was to be annulled. (2) Raghunath was to withdraw com-

pletely from the State affairs and receive a pension. (3) The fort of Thana with the island of Salsette was to remain in English possession. (4) The English were to retain the territory they had occupied in Gujarat. (5) An amount of twelve lakhs was to be paid to the English for their expenses in the war.

The Bombay Government condemned this treaty as highly injurious to the interests and reputation of the Company. They afforded asylum to Raghunath Rao at Surat ignoring Colonel Upton's protests. They had already referred the treaty of Surat to the Court of Directors. Orders now arrived from London, approving the treaty of Surat and directing retention of the territory obtained from Raghunath Rao. The Bombay Government threw the treaty of Purandhar to the winds and provided residence for Raghunath Rao at Bombay (November 1776). Colonel Upton was recalled to Bengal (1777). Mostyn came to Poona as the Bombay Government's envoy, but he could accomplish nothing as he was suspected by the ministers.

Affairs at Poona

The heterogeneous Council of *Barbhais* could not long remain an effective body. Sakharam Bapu and Nana Fadnavis continued to be its permanent members, and power soon came to be gathered in the latter's hands. Sakharam Bapu and Moroba Fadnavis advocated some lasting arrangement with Raghunath Rao by conciliation and compromise, but Nana was stern and unbending. Nana contrived to throw Moroba into prison where he passed dark days till 1800 (July 1778). A few months later Sakharam Bapu was confined for treason (February 1779); he died two years later (August 1781). The elimination of these two powerful rivals left Nana as the sole master at Poona. The minor Peshwa remained completely under his control. The nominal King Ram Raja died (December 1777) after having adopted Shahu II as his successor.

When Nana heard that France had declared war upon England as an ally of the rebellious American colonies, he decided to make friends with the French as an offset to the English support for Raghunath Rao. A French adventurer named St. Lubin, who claimed to be an accredited ambassador from the King of France, Louis XVI, landed at Chaul, near Bombay (March 1777), and proceeded to Poona. Nana affected to believe his story and allowed him to stay at Poona for over a year. His presence at the Maratha capital coincided with that of Mostyn. As he caused irritation to the English and created problems for

the Marathas, he was given leave to depart from Poona (July 1778).

Nana's purpose was to use St. Lubin as a lever against the English, but his policy had a contrary effect. 'The idea of a French intrigue in India was sufficient to stir up the resentment of every Englishman in the country'. Warren Hastings captured Chandernagar and Pondichery (July-October 1778). Nana realized the significance of the changing situation and proceeded to deal with it in co-operation with Mahadji Sindhia.

Convention of Wadgaon (1779)

The Court of Directors instructed Warren Hastings 'not to engage with Raghunath in any scheme whatever for retrieving his affairs'. But he adopted an aggressive policy and authorized the Bombay Government (March 1778) to instal the pretender on the Peshwa's *gadi* and seize the Maratha possessions on the west coast. The Bombay Government decided to establish Raghunath as regent for the minor Peshwa since he could not contest Sawai Madhav Rao's legal claim to the Peshwaship. This arrangement was formalised by a fresh agreement with Raghunath (November 1778).

The campaign of the Bombay army started in November 1778. Surrounded by the Maratha forces at Wadgaon, it was forced to surrender on humiliating terms (January 1779). The English promised to restore all acquisitions of territory made since 1773 (including Thana and Salsette), to stop an English force which was advancing from Bengal to Bombay, and to surrender two hostages for performance. Raghunath took refuge with Mahadji Sindhia, thereby saving the English from the humiliation of having to surrender him to his enemies at Poona.

These terms were negotiated through Mahadji Sindhia. His political stature was raised by the role which he played as an independent arbiter between the English and the Poona Government. Sakharam Bapu was arrested soon after the Convention was signed. 'Nana and Mahadji henceforth became perpetual colleagues in the Maratha Government, mutually indispensable and yet temperamentally antagonistic and suspicious of each other'.

Goddard's exploits

Warren Hastings disavowed the Convention of Wadgaon: so did the Bombay Government. The Bengal army marching to Bombay under orders from Hastings had been delayed on

the way. Its commander, Colonel Leslie, had wasted time embroiling himself with the chiefs in Bundelkhand. On his death (October 1778) Colonel Goddard took charge and brought the army to Surat (February 1779) about seven weeks after the disaster at Wadgaon. His march through the heart of the sub-continent immensely increased the prestige of the English arms throughout India. The 'frantic military exploit' planned by Hastings turned the tide in favour of the English.

Mahadji Sindhia connived at Raghunath's escape from his custody. The pretender fled to take refuge with Goddard. He was promised nothing more than a monthly allowance. The English dropped him and 'became in name, as well in fact, a principal in the struggle'.

Promoted to membership of the Council as also to the position of Commander-in-Chief at Bombay, Goddard turned towards Gujarat. He occupied Dabhoi and secured from Fateh Singh Gaikwar a treaty agreeing to assist the English with a force of 3,000 horse and to cede the revenues of certain districts as soon as he was put in possession of Ahmedabad (January 1780). A leading member of the Maratha confederacy was thus separated from the Poona Government. Ahmedabad was occupied. Mahadji Sindhia and Tukoji Holkar now advanced in support of the Poona Government, but there was no decisive military action. As Sindhia began to negotiate with Govind Rao Gaikwar, the rival of Fateh Singh Gaikwar, Goddard continued to stay in Gujarat although the Bombay Council urged the need of capturing Bassein.

'Grand Quadruple Alliance'

Meanwhile the diplomatic genius of Nana Fadnavis had brought about an alliance of four powers: the Peshwa with whom Mahadji Sindhia and Tukoji Holkar were already allied, Mudhoji Bhonsle of Nagpur, the Nizam, and Haidar Ali. Nizam Ali had become offended with the English on account of their surreptitious acquisition of Guntur from his disaffected brother Basalat Jang. Haidar Ali had several grievances against the English. The 'Grand Quadruple Alliance' (1780) was intended to counteract the English offensive. It was decided that the Poona forces would oppose Goddard, Mudhoji Bhonsle would invade Bengal, and Nizam Ali and Haidar Ali would launch campaigns in the 'Northern Sarkars' and Karnatak respectively. The Portuguese, with whom Nana Fadnavis signed a treaty, the French settlements which were already involved in war with the

English, and the Dutch were prepared to co-operate with the allied powers.

This plan miscarried because Warren Hastings knew how to exploit the selfishness and political short-sightedness of the Indian powers. The Nizam was won over by the return of Guntur, Mudhoji Bhonsle by large payments of money. Their defection weakened the allied powers, but Haidar Ali fulfilled the compact and carried fire and sword to the plains of Karnatak.

Last campaigns

In 1780 the English won three important victories. Captain Popham occupied Gwalior in August. 'This, an achievement of great merit in itself, was of far greater importance in its political effects. The fort had always been looked upon throughout India as impregnable, and its capture raised the prestige of the English enormously'. After the fall of Gwalior 'Maratha rule in Central India appeared to be on the point of extinction'. But Mahadji's victories at Sironj and Sipri (1781) retrieved the Maratha position to some extent.

On the west coast Kalyan fell in October 1780, and Goddard captured Bassein in December. The fall of this stronghold was 'a very serious blow to Nana'; its 'moral effect was almost as great as that caused by the capture of Gwalior, owing to the fact that it had been taken from the Portuguese in 1739 and thus represented a (Maratha) victory over Europeans'.

Treaty of Salbai (1782)

In 1781 the English were anxious for peace. Goddard's campaigns of three years cost more than a *crore* of rupees to the Company's treasury. His defeat at Khandala (April 1781) marked the failure of the Bombay Government's plan to send troops to Poona through the Bhore Ghat. Moreover, this set back created famine conditions at Bombay. In Malwa Mahadji Sindhia's persistent fighting even after the fall of Gwalior had created a stalemate. On the east coast the English faced far more serious difficulties as a result of Haidar Ali's victorious march. The veteran general, Sir Eyre Coote, wrote to the Supreme Government: 'We are altogether unequal to the difficult and dangerous contention in which we are now engaged'. It was known that a French naval squadron commanded by their renowned admiral Suffren had started from Europe early in 1781 with a view to supporting Haidar Ali. Hastings felt it necessary to ex-

tricate the English from the struggle with the Marathas and to direct their entire resources against Haidar Ali.

On the Maratha side Mahadji Sindhia, who had been playing a crucial role in the war, now wanted peace. He realized the effect of the fall of Gwalior and Bassein. The Maratha victory at Khandala, to which Holkar had contributed, enhanced his reputation. Sindhia's primary interest lay in Central India where Holkar was his rival.

It was Mahadji who took the leading part in the negotiations for peace. Haidar Ali was left out, although this was a violation of the terms of the 'Grand Quadruple Alliance', because he was not expected to surrender the territorial gains which he had already made in Karnatak.

The treaty concluded at Salbai (May 1782) provided as follows: (1) Salsette should continue in the possession of the English. (2) The whole of the territory conquered since the treaty of Purandhar (1776), including Bassein, should be restored to the Marathas. (3) In Gujarat Fateh Singh Gaikwar should remain in possession of the territory which he had before the war and should serve the Peshwa as before. (4) The English should not afford any further support to Raghunath Rao and the Peshwa should grant him a maintenance allowance. (5) Haidar Ali should return all territory recently taken from the English and the Nawab of Arcot. (6) The English should enjoy the privileges of trade as before. (7) The Peshwa should not support any other European nation. (8) The Peshwa and the English should undertake that their several allies should remain at peace with one another. (9) Mahadji Sindhia should be the mutual guarantee for the proper observance of the terms of the treaty.

The immediate gains of the English from the treaty of Salbai were the permanent acquisition of Salsette and the isolation of Haidar Ali. To say that it 'established, beyond dispute, the dominance of the British as controlling factor in Indian politics' is historically incorrect. The limited success of the Company in this seven years' war was due largely to the 'courage, talents and amazing power of organization' of Warren Hastings. 'for it was he, single-handed, who found money and men, and steered the political course which led to victory'

The Marathas, under the able leadership of Nana Fadnavis and Mahadji Sindhia, saved their empire for a period of twenty years 'by pushing back the rising tide of the English aggression'.

The empire submitted to the English yoke two decades later primarily because its foundations were sapped by internal dissensions. The events of 1802-1805 did not follow logically from the First Anglo-Maratha War, nor can the rise of the English to the position of the paramount power in 1818 be regarded as 'an inevitable result of the position gained by them by the treaty of Salbai'. The long war discloses the continuing vitality of the Marathas. 'Maratha diplomats and warriors exhibited the same toughness as before and held their own against the singular resourcefulness of one of the greatest British proconsuls, Warren Hastings'.

Mahadji Sindhia gained much from the treaty of Salbai. He was formally recognized as the arbiter between the Poona Government and the English in regard to the implementation of the terms accepted by them. He formed a correct assessment of the strength of the English and never engaged in hostilities with them again. They reciprocated and left him a free hand in Mughal imperial affairs. In spite of his political and military successes in the years after Salbai he did not repudiate the Peshwa's suzerainty even though it was his rival Nana Fadnavis who controlled the Peshwa. It was as the Peshwa's deputy that he functioned as the protector of the titular Mughal Emperor Shah Alam.

3. SECOND ANGLO-MYSORE WAR (1780-84)

Maratha-Mysore relations (1772-80)

Taking advantage of Madhav Rao's death Haidar Ali tried to recover the ground which he had lost by his treaty with Trimbak Rao. He sent his troops to Chitaldurg and Savanur and threatened to attack Sira, Madgiri and Gurrukonda. He declined to pay the arrears of tribute. His position improved after the murder of Narayan Rao when the quarrel between Raghunath Rao and the *Barbhais* threw the Maratha Government out of gear. Free from the danger of any Maratha invasion, Haidar found an opportunity not only to regain what he had lost at the time of Madhav Rao but also to conquer Coorg and reconquer Malabar.

Hostilities were precipitated by Haidar's conquest of Gooty from Murar Rao Ghorpare (1776). An anti-Mysore alliance was formed by the Poona Government and the Nizam and it was decided that they should share the conquered territory equally.

Haidar defeated the Marathas at Saunshi, near Dharwar (1777). The Marathas resorted to guerilla warfare, but their operations were interrupted by dissensions at Poona (1778). Haidar made full use of his well-trained cavalry and infantry to extend his northern boundary across the Tungabhadra to the Krishna. Madhav Rao's work was undone by the internal crisis that gripped the Marathas during the years 1774-78. When the war with the English led the Poona Government to seek a *rap-prochement* with Haidar (1780) they found a prompt response.

Second Anglo-Mysore War (1780-84)

Haidar Ali had several grievances against the English. They had violated the treaty of 1769 by refusing to give him military assistance during the Maratha invasion of 1770-72. They did not supply him guns, saltpetre, lead etc., but the French at Mahe gave him liberal supplies. When war began between England and France in connection with the American War of Independence the English occupied Mahe (March 1779); Haidar's troops took part in the defence of the port. By reason of his conquests on the Malabar coast he claimed full sovereignty over the whole area, including the European settlements; but the Europeans did not acknowledge this claim. The Madras Government alienated both Haidar Ali and Nizam Ali by offering protection to the latter's brother, Basalat Jang of Adoni.

The Anglo-Maratha War led to the formation of the Maratha-Mysore-Nizam alliance, and Haidar Ali found an excellent opportunity to launch a massive attack on his old enemy, Muhammad Ali of Arcot, and his English protectors. The attack was launched in July 1780. Haidar's army flooded Muhammad Ali's territory. 'A swarm of universal fire blasted every field, consumed every house, destroyed every temple'. An English brigade under Baillie was cut up; Munro, the victor of Buxar (1764), retreated in panic to Madras (1780). This was followed by three victories won by Coote (1781): Porto Novo, Pollilore, Solingar. He also relieved Vellore which had been besieged by Haidar. Next year Haidar retrieved his military prestige; his son Tipu cut down Colonel Braithwaite's detachment and the Colonel was taken prisoner (1782). The English failed to make the least progress towards driving Haidar out of Muhammad Ali's territories, and their resources and finances steadily declined. Although the Marathas withdrew from the war by the treaty of Salbai (1782) Haidar continued the struggle single-handed.

In 1782 a French squadron under the command of Suffren, 'a leader of transcendent abilities', appeared in the Indian waters. Four actions took place between the French squadron and the English squadron commanded by Sir Edward Hughes, but no decisive result followed. Suffren seized Trincomali (in Ceylon) which was a far better base for French maritime operations in Indian waters than distant Mauritius.

As the operations in Karnatak tended to be a war of attrition, the English created a second front in Malabar. Forces sent from Bombay were opposed there by a part of Haidar's army under Tipu's command (1782-84). Brigadier Mathews occupied Mangalore and Bidnur. But Tipu soon recovered the lost ground; Mathews and all his men were captured, and small garrisons at Mangalore and Honawar alone remained to offer feeble resistance. Mangalore surrendered after a long siege.

Meanwhile Haidar had died (December 1782) and Tipu had been proclaimed his successor without any opposition. Six months later (June 1783) news arrived that peace had been concluded between England and France in Europe. The French general Bussy had already arrived on the coast (April 1784). He established himself at Cuddalore; after some indecisive actions against the English forces he suspended hostilities on receipt of the news of conclusion of peace in Europe.

Treaty of Mangalore (1784)

As in the case of the Marathas, so in that of Mysore, it was Warren Hastings who took firm steps to strengthen the Company's military position. But it was the Governor of Madras, Lord Macartney, who settled the terms of peace with Tipu. The treaty of Mangalore (March 1784) provided for mutual restitution of conquests and release of all prisoners. The provisions of the treaty of Salbai regarding the restoration of conquered territories were completely ignored. Hastings regarded this arrangement as a 'humiliating pacification'. He went so far as to move Macartney's suspension for having disobeyed the orders of the Supreme Government. Bengal contributed no less than 265 lakhs of rupees to the expenses of the war because the resources of Madras were wholly unequal to the maintenance of a long struggle. Muhammad Ali's treasury had been exhausted by twenty years of financial mismanagement. 'In the crisis which resulted from Haidar's invasion, he had sought to evade payment rather than to provide with funds the only power that would protect him'. The military record of the English forces

did not encourage continuation of the war. The terms obtained by Macartney from Tipu were much the same as those which Hastings had been able to get from the Marathas. The arrangement made at Mangalore was, therefore, 'not unreasonable'.

Haidar Ali: government and army

Although Haidar usurped power by overthrowing Nanjaraj and Khande Rao, he did not set aside the Raja. His attitude towards the Hindu dynasty was more or less similar to that of the Peshwas to the descendants of Shivaji. Tipu broke this tradition; he dethroned the Raja and proclaimed himself as Sultan (1786). Haidar exercised the sovereign right of striking coins in his own name, but he associated them with Hindu deities. Wilks, the historian of Mysore, describes him as the 'most tolerant' of all Muslim rulers. Tipu issued a new calendar in which Arabic names were substituted for Hindu names.

Haidar's system of government was monarchical in form and despotic in character. He imported strength and vigour into it by adopting two methods. Officers were selected on the basis of ability, not of social position. Every department, civil as also military, was under his personal supervision.

Haidar's revenue system gave weightage to the principle of farming. Large districts were rented to *amildars* on favourable terms. They paid their dues regularly; but if they amassed large sums, they were compelled to disgorge their wealth and transferred to other districts. Tipu introduced an elaborate system of checks and balances; but it served only to diminish the revenue, because all parties acted in collusion and divided the public money among themselves. Despite Tipu's restless innovations the institutions of good government maintained by Haidar survived; this surprised the British conquerors. The revenues of Tipu's dominions in 1792 amounted to 2 *crores* and 37 *lakhs* of rupees.

Haidar maintained a large army. In 1780, when he entered Karnatak, he had about 90,000 troops with him. He was strong in cavalry, but comparatively weak in infantry and artillery. The English army, small in numbers, was composed almost wholly of infantry. He lost many battles to the English as also to the Marathas; but he was not ruined because they were unable to pursue and he was persistent in his resistance. 'His equanimity was uniform in every aspect of fortune and he generally extracted some advantage from every discomfiture'.

He excelled in capacity for military organization rather than in strategy and tactics.

Haidar commanded the entire sea board from Sadashivgarh to Cochin. His conquest of Bidnur and Sonda (1763-64) brought the ports of Honawar, Mangalore, Bhatkal and Sadashivgarh in his possession. His fleet helped him in conquering Malabar and in bringing more ports under his control. He had excellent sailors in the Moplahs who were good navigators. During the First Anglo-Mysore War a squadron sent from Bombay destroyed his naval power. He started a ship-building programme with the help of some Portuguese and Dutch ship-builders, but it failed in 1780; an English squadron destroyed his ships at Mangalore harbour.

According to Wilks, there was a proverb in Mysore that 'Haidar was born to create an empire, Tipu to lose one'. Endowed with many gifts, Haidar transformed the small principality of Mysore into one of the big powers of South India. Wilks draws a contrast between the creator and the destroyer: 'Haidar was an improving monarch and exhibited few innovations; Tipu was an innovating monarch and made no improvements'.

4. THE SOUTH INDIAN POWERS AND THE ENGLISH

The Marathas and Tipu (1782-87)

The Marathas committed an act of political treachery when they concluded the treaty of Salbai (1782) behind the back of Haidar Ali in violation of the terms of the 'Grand Quadruple Alliance'. Their offence was aggravated by the provision of the treaty requiring the Peshwa to ensure Haidar's surrender of the territory recently conquered by him in Karnatak. Although the English pressed the Marathas for compliance with this provision, neither Haidar Ali (who died a few months after Salbai) nor Tipu paid any heed to the Anglo-Maratha design against Mysore. A new treaty was concluded between the Marathas and the English in 1783. It was agreed that, in case of Tipu's refusal to accede to the terms of the treaty of Salbai, the Peshwa should assist the English in their war against him, and the territories conquered from him would be shared by them. Nana Fadnavis and Mahadji Sindhia desired to 'oblige Tipu to conform to the terms of the treaty of Salbai, in order that he might appear to the other powers of India as a Maratha dependent as well as a tributary'. The Marathas sent troops against Tipu, but the

treaty of Mangalore (1784) interrupted the campaign. Undaunted by this set back, Nana concluded an alliance with the Nizam which was directed against Tipu (1784).

Tipu's reply to this Maratha-Nizam alliance was an invasion of the Nizam's districts south of the Krishna. He also occupied several important places within Maratha political jurisdiction, including Nalgund, Kittur and Dharwar (1785). He practised deceit upon Nana and committed atrocities in the occupied territory. Nana turned to the English at Bombay for military assistance against Tipu. At first they declared their neutrality; but their policy changed when they realized that the Marathas, being disgusted with them, might turn to the French. The presence of the French agent Montigny at Poona increased their apprehension. The Supreme Government, with Macpherson as temporary Governor-General, decided to offer limited military assistance to the Marathas against Tipu (February 1786). At the same time Nana and the Nizam met, and it was decided that the two allies would divide among themselves the territories of Tipu which they might conquer.

In the military operations which followed the allies took Badami; but Adoni, the most important fort of the Nizam south of the Tungabhadra, fell into Tipu's hands. He won further successes, including the occupation of Savanur. But he apprehended that the English would join his enemies. He concluded a hasty peace, agreeing to pay arrears of tribute and surrendering Badami, Adoni, Nalgund and Kittur (March 1787). He retained possession of Savanur and Dharwar. On the whole, he 'concluded a successful campaign by an inglorious peace'. But the British Resident at Poona remarked that 'he had dissolved a formidable confederacy and dissipated an immense army'.

Lord Cornwallis

Lord Cornwallis assumed charge as Governor-General (September 1786) six months before Tipu's conclusion of peace with the Marathas and the Nizam. So far as the Company's relations with the 'Country Powers' were concerned, he was bound by the declaration in Pitt's India Act (passed by the British Parliament in 1784): 'it shall not be lawful for the Governor-General and Council, without the express command and authority of the Court of Directors, either to declare war or commence hostilities, or enter into any treaty for making war, against any of the Country Powers or States in India, or

any treaty for guaranteeing the possessions of any Country Princes or States'. This general provision was subject to some exceptions, but the principle behind it was the belief of the British Parliament that 'to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India are measures repugnant to the wish, the honour, and policy of this nation'.

Pitt's India Act conferred upon the Governor-General and Council larger powers over the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay 'in all points as relate to any transactions with the Country Powers, or to war or peace' than the Supreme Government enjoyed under the Regulating Act. Cornwallis was, therefore, not likely to be embarrassed by such difficulties as Warren Hastings had experienced in his relations with the Bombay and Madras Governments during the wars with the Marathas and Mysore. Moreover, he had the power of overruling his Council—a power which Warren Hastings was denied,—and he held the office of Commander-in-Chief in addition to that of Governor-General. He was an experienced general; he had fought in the Seven Years' War as also in the American War of Independence. In political and military matters he had a much freer hand than Warren Hastings.

Tri-partite alliance (1790)

The new Governor-General's wide 'knowledge of international politics made him consider India as a vital point in the enduring rivalry between England and France'. Tipu was making diplomatic manoeuvres to involve France and Turkey in Indian affairs. He sent an embassy to the King of France in 1785 and cancelled the bonds for supplies to the French troops during the Second Anglo-Mysore War. He sent an embassy to Constantinople in 1784 and another in 1785. But nothing tangible came out of these diplomatic feelers. Tipu also tried—unsuccessfully—to establish social and political links with the Nizam. The events of 1782-87 ruled out any *rapprochement* with the Marathas. Thus Tipu was left politically isolated.

Cornwallis wrote towards the end of 1787 that 'the French policy has been generally extremely ambitious and there appears to be no bounds to the designs of Tipu'. He felt that an alliance with the Marathas and the Nizam was necessary to 'curb effectually the dangerous ambition of a powerful enemy'. By the middle of 1789 the Marathas as also the Nizam were brought over to the side of the English. A settlement satisfactory to the Nizam was made in regard to Guntur. The forma-

lisation of the understanding between the three powers was precipitated by Tipu's invasion of Travancore (December 1789). A treaty was concluded at Poona (June 1790). It provided for military co-operation between the armies of the Peshwa and the Nizam with the English forces, and all conquests were to be equally shared by the three parties. A treaty on similar terms was made with the Nizam at Pangal (July 1790). The restraint put on the Governor-General's treaty-making power by Pitt's India Act was evaded in a curious manner: the non-intervention order was obeyed in letter but broken in spirit.

Third Anglo-Mysore War (1790-92)

Travancore with its commercial and strategic advantages had attracted Hajdar Ali's interest. The Raja of Travancore provoked Tipu by erecting defences, known as Travancore Lines, on the territory of the Raja of Cochin whom he claimed as his tributary. After initial failure Tipu carried everything before him in his second attack (April 1790). The Raja of Travancore had been included in the treaty of Mangalore among the friends of the English.

The war which followed the conclusion of the treaties of the English with the Marathas and the Nizam lasted for nearly two years. It fell into three campaigns. The first was commanded by General Medows. The Marathas and the Nizam gave useful aid. Tipu resisted the invaders and frustrated their attempts to penetrate into his dominions. The second campaign began in January 1791 with Cornwallis himself in command. Bangalore was captured. Cornwallis advanced towards Seringapatam, but Tipu's 'unexpected generalship' and the failure of all the equipments of his army compelled him to retreat. The third campaign began after the rainy season of 1791. Tipu lost Coorg and Malabar. With an army more than 40,000 strong, including the contingents of the Marathas and the Nizam, Cornwallis advanced towards Seringapatam. After repulsing the first assault Tipu realized that the threat was too serious to be successfully met. He offered terms.

By the treaty of Seringapatam (March 1792) Tipu surrendered half of his territory. The English share was substantial—the rich districts of Baramahal, Dindigul, a large slice of Malabar including Calicut and Cannanore. The Raja of Coorg was given independence and brought under the Company's control. The Maratha boundary was extended to the Tungabhadra.

The Nizam got territory extending from the Krishna to beyond the Pennar, including Cudappah and Gooty. In addition to cession of territory Tipu had to pay an indemnity of three *crores* and thirty *lakhs*. Two sons of Tipu were surrendered as hostages for his good faith.

Cornwallis claimed that the war had 'effectually crippled our enemy without making our friends too formidable'. But Tipu was still left with sufficient territory 'to make him respectable and still in some degree formidable to his neighbours'. The English victory had been made possible by the co-operation of the Marathas and the Nizam; but the alliance of 1790 proved to be nothing more than a temporary arrangement for achieving a limited purpose. It is probable that the Marathas were not prepared for the total destruction of Tipu's power. There was a breach in their relations with the Nizam, culminating in the battle of Kharda (1795).

Maratha-Nizam relations: battle of Kharda (1795)

Although there was an open war between Raghunath Rao and Nizam Ali in 1773, the relations of the two powers were generally friendly during the next two decades. In 1779 the Nizam took an active interest in the formation of an anti-British confederacy with the Peshwa, Bhonsle and Haidar Ali. In 1784 the treaty of Yadgir, directed against Tipu, provided that 'neither party shall ever adopt any measure of hostility against the other'. In 1790 both the powers bound themselves by separate treaties to co-operate with the English against Tipu.

After the partition of Tipu's territories by the treaty of Seringapatam (1792) a new phase began in Maratha-Nizam relations. Nana Fadnavis began to press the Nizam for payment of the arrears of *chauth* which had first been imposed on Hyderabad territories by Baji Rao I. The Nizam could not repudiate the Maratha claim; but he evaded it on various prettexts. The wrangling between the two parties continued till the arrival of Mahadji Sindhia at Poona (1792), 'bringing an increase of power and prestige which terrified most Indian chiefs'. But the Nizam's minister, a Persian immigrant known by his title of Amir-ul-umara, adopted an attitude of intransigence. Negotiations held at Poona by the Nizam's agent, Mir Alam, proved fruitless (1794).

Nizam Ali was the first to move with a large army towards the Maratha frontier. All the principal feudatories of the Peshwa—Tukoji Holkar, Sindhia's forces, Raghuji Bhonsle,

Govind Rao Gaikwar, and others—assembled under his banner. The great *jagirdars* of South Maharashtra—the Patwardhans, the Rastes, the Nimbalkars, the Ghatges, the Pawars, the Thorats—swelled the ranks of the Peshwa's army. The Marathas had 84,000 horse, 38,000 foot and 182 guns against the Nizam's 45,000 horse, 44,000 foot and 108 guns.

The two armies met at Kharda, 150 miles east of Poona. After skirmishes and a pitched battle the Nizam took shelter in the small fort of Kharda, but scarcity of food and water compelled him to ask for terms (March 1795). Peace was concluded a month later after Amir-ul-umara's personal surrender to Nana Fadnavis; he was placed in confinement and released more than a year later. The Nizam had to accept harsh terms, including surrender of territories yielding an annual revenue of about 32 *lakhs*, payment of two *crores* as indemnity and arrears, and payment of about a *crore* to Daulat Rao Sindhia and Raghuji Bhonsle. The success of the enterprise was due to the energy and political sagacity of Nana Fadnavis. 'He was now at the summit of prosperity; without the intervention of a foreign power he had obtained every object of his ambition'.

The Nizam had no intention to execute the terms of the treaty. He adopted delaying tactics, and chance favoured him. The young Peshwa, Sawai Madhav Rao, died within six months of the treaty and Maratha politics took a different turn. Nana Fadnavis concluded a secret agreement with the Nizam, promising restoration of the ceded territories and remission of the balance of the tribute provided he supported the installation of Baji Rao II in the Peshwaship (October 1796). 'Thus the whole affair of Kharda proved a ridiculous farce and brought no good to the Maratha State'.

Sir John Shore: Non-intervention

Lord Cornwallis was succeeded as Governor-General by Sir John Shore (October 1793-March 1798). He was, like Warren Hastings, a civil servant; he distinguished himself in revenue administration in Bengal. He had none of his predecessor's 'military interests or international experience'. Moreover, he had serious financial and military difficulties. The Company had incurred heavy debt during the war with Tipu. The Company's army, without competent generals, and with a small proportion of British troops as against Indian sepoys, was not strong enough to wage a successful war against the Marathas; and Tipu was 'searching heaven and earth to secure allies'. It was wise

caution, not lack of 'political sagacity', which led Shore to pursue a policy of Non-intervention in regard to conflicts among the 'Country Powers'. This policy was in conformity with the directive given by Pitt's India Act (1784).

The Maratha-Nizam dispute which led to the battle of Kharda (1795) served as the crucial test of Shore's adherence to the policy of Non-intervention. The Nizam claimed the Company's protection under the treaty of 1768 (Caillaud's treaty) which declared that the friends and enemies of one of the parties were to be deemed the friends and enemies of the other. Shore did not respond. Cornwallis had declared in 1789 that it was not permissible to employ the Company's forces against any power in alliance with the English. Shore realized that nothing decisive could be gained by the English through friendship with the Nizam who was the weakest among the South Indian powers. The Marathas commanded vast resources, and he wanted to consolidate alliance with them.

In the case of Oudh, a weak and dependent State, Shore acted as an interventionist. The possibility of Zaman Shah's invasion was an important factor. In the case of the Nawab of Arcot, another weak and dependent State, he declined to compel the incompetent ruler to improve his administration.

Nawab of Arcot

In Bengal the English assumed political control soon after they attained military supremacy; in Karnatak they did not do so. Their protegee, Muhammad Ali, had to meet a large share of the expenses of the Company's wars with the French and with Haidar Ali which were fought ostensibly to defend his dominions. As his financial resources were inadequate and his administration was corrupt and inefficient, he borrowed large sums of money at high rates of interest from the Company's servants as also from private English merchants.

During the Third Anglo-Mysore War Cornwallis assumed entire control of the Nawab's dominions. This did not either improve the internal administration of the State or weaken the hold of the Nawab's usurious English creditors.

Muhammad Ali died in 1795. He was succeeded by Umdat-ul-Umara. Sir John Shore recognized that the Nawab's territories were 'mismanaged in the most ruinous manner', but he thought that the Company's treaties with him did not permit it to 'dragoon him into concessions'.

FALL OF MYSORE AND THE MARATHA EMPIRE

I. CIVIL WARS IN MAHARASHTRA

Eclipse of Poona

The death of Peshwa Madhav Rao I in 1772 'introduced, at first unseen by any one, a profound change' in the political system of the Marathas. Poona ceased to be the centre from which the activities of the Marathas flowed in different directions; and the Central Government, which for four generations had a permanent and active head commanding lawful obedience from all, became practically 'headless'. For about three decades the Peshwa's seat was occupied by persons who were unable to function as *de facto* rulers due to minority or political convulsions. 'The guiding power in the administration inevitably passed on to a minister or a board of ministers'. But a minister, however efficient and wise, can never command the respect and influence which naturally belong to a hereditary ruler. He is always troubled by rivals who dispute his authority and compel him to use force or appeasement to defend his own position. Nana Fadnavis held the dominant position during the Peshwaship of Sawai Madhav Rao. He was crushed by 'Peshwa Baji Rao II who, unable to control powerful rebellious vassals, accepted the protection of the English (1802). During these years the centre of gravity of Maratha politics shifted from Poona to North India. There Mahadji Sindhia established a new Maratha State which was actually independent of Poona although he obeyed the old tradition of acknowledging the Peshwa's formal suzerainty. The leading vassals—Sindhia', Holkar, Bhonsle, Gaikwar—ruled their respective territories in North India as independent princes; the Peshwa's minister was almost solely concerned with the political problems of South India. The battle of Kharda (1795) was the last occasion on which the principal Maratha chiefs assembled under the Peshwa's flag to serve a common cause. The death of Mahadji Sindhia (1794), followed by the death of Ahalya Bai (1795) and Tukoji Holkar (1797) and the fall of Nana Fadnavis (1798), removed the leaders who formed links with the past and brought to power new men who attached little importance to Maratha unity.

Mahadji Sindhia : estimate

'Mahadji Sindhia, a heroic personality, dominates the North Indian history of his time like a colossus'. The foundations of his political and military reputation were laid during the first Anglo-Maratha War. He established Maratha control over the Imperial Government of Delhi and thereby 'wiped off the disgrace of Panipat'. In maintaining the Maratha hold on North India he received opposition instead of support from Nana Fadnavis, and encountered the active hostility of Tukoji Holkar. 'He towers over Maratha history in solitary grandeur, a ruler without an ally, without a party'. He broke through the successive nets of intrigue woven round him by open enemies and nominal allies. He created a powerful army which was, during his life time, an effective instrument of success. In private life 'this strong and busy man of action' was 'intensely religious, devoted to his family, meek in spirit and respectful to venerable persons'.

Succession at Poona

Immediately after the victory at Kharda (1795) Nana Fadnavis was 'at the summit of prosperity'. His powerful rival, Mahadji Sindhia, was dead, and his successor, Daulat Rao Sindhia, was favourably disposed towards him. Tukoji Holkar had become imbecile, both in mind and body, and his officers were subservient to Nana. Raghuji Bhonsle was 'completely secure in his interest'. The influential Brahmin *jagirdars* were 'of his party'. But the Peshwa, Sawai Madhav Rao, impatient of the all-powerful minister's control, was found to be conducting secret intrigue with Baji Rao, son of Raghunath Rao, who was then in confinement.

The situation was radically altered by the Peshwa's sudden death (October 1795). He fell down from the balcony of his palace. Whether the fall was accidental, or whether he deliberately threw himself down, is a question which cannot be satisfactorily answered. It was known that he desired personal freedom and independent exercise of power. However, this unforeseen development 'let loose all the evil forces' inherent in the Maratha character, destroying the unity and cohesion and hastening the final ruin of the State in less than a quarter of a century'.

The search for a successor was a complicated affair. The only surviving direct members of the Peshwa's family were Raghunath Rao's sons, Baji Rao and Chimnaji Appa, and his adopted son Amrit Rao. The principal actors in the field were

Nana Fadnavis and Daulat Rao Sindhia ; each of them tried to have his own nominee installed as Peshwa. Nana's weapons were diplomacy and intrigue ; Sindhia's strength lay in the powerful army left by his predecessor. Seven months after the Peshwa's death Chimnaji was invested with the robes of Peshwaship (May 1796), but the real power remained in Sindhia's hands. Nana Fadnavis spent several months to undo this arrangement. His purpose was to wrest back power for himself and defeat Sindhia's overgrown authority in the Poona Government. He won over Baji Rao whom he had done all he could to offend throughout life. Chimnaji was thrown out ; Baji Rao became Peshwa (December 1796). This arrangement was publicly supported by Sindhia, Holkar and Bhonsle. Baji Rao gave an assurance in writing that he would allow Nana Fadnavis to exercise during his life the full executive power.

Fall of Nana Fadnavis

'As a result of the intrigues and betrayals' through which this settlement was made, 'a Maratha word and promise came henceforth to be a synonym for falsehood and treachery throughout India'. Baji Rao II was a vicious youth. He was surrounded by evil counsellors. As he was not prepared to remain a mere puppet in Nana's hands his disagreement with the minister soon became public knowledge. Sindhia tried to profit as much as possible at the expense of the Peshwa and the minister. Baji Rao supported Sindhia in his intervention in the succession to the Holkar State after the death of Tukoji Holkar. Sindhia's armed strength, joined to Baji Rao's wicked intentions, became a terror to all chiefs, bankers and leaders of the Maratha State. They decided to take Nana's accumulated treasure, amounting to several *crores*, by force. The minister was arrested and kept in confinement for several months (1798). Then he was readmitted into the administration, but he was no longer in control of affairs. He died in 1800.

Nana Fadnavis: estimate

Nana started his career as a *fadnavis*, i.e., officer in charge of accounts ; he was concerned with the income and expenditure of the State. He received his training under Peshwa Madhav Rao I whom he served for ten years. In this special field he achieved unique distinction. The course of events after that Peshwa's death brought upon him much larger administrative and political responsibilities. He conducted the whole administration practically on his own responsibility, improving the sys-

tem of accounts and meeting the increasing financial needs of the State during a period of successive wars. His success in achieving co-operation with Mahadji Sindhia during the First Anglo-Maratha War and in mobilising the principal Maratha chiefs at Kharda under the banner of the Peshwa testifies to his diplomatic gifts and statesmanship. But this 'Chitpavan Machiavelli' took a narrow view of Maratha interest when he obstructed Mahadji Sindhia in his North Indian plans. He was afraid lest this powerful chief should push him away from control of the Poona Government. He did not realize the significance of Sindhia's achievement in making the Peshwa 'the dictator—through his vicar—of the Mughal Empire'.

Nana failed as an administrator in so far as he misappropriated large sums of public money which should have been spent for the welfare of the State. He was not a soldier; he lacked personal courage. This was a serious disqualification for a Maratha leader. His ambition was 'not always restrained by principles'. This explains his 'deplorable handling' of the situation after Sawai Madhav Rao's death. But with all his defects he was 'certainly a great statesman', as Grant Duff says. The British Resident Palmer reported after his death to the Governor-General: 'With Nana has departed all the wisdom and moderation of the Maratha Government'.

Daulat Rao Sindhia

Mahadji Sindhia spent the last two years of his life at Poona. His main purpose was to secure from Nana Fadnavis an agreement for the total exclusion of Tukoji Holkar from political power in Hindustan. Nana was not prepared to hand over Hindustan to Sindhia's undivided control, and even after suffering a crushing defeat at Lakheri (1793), Holkar was not prepared to give up his rights in the Doab and Rajasthan. The problem remained unsettled at the time of Mahadji's death. It was inherited by his successor Daulat Rao Sindhia, his grand-nephew, a boy of fifteen at the time of his accession (1794).

With a view to obtaining ascendancy at the Poona court Daulat Rao intervened in the selection of Peshwa Sawai Madhav Rao's successor. Baji Rao II became Peshwa with his aid (1796) and gave him a free hand. Through Sharza Rao Ghatge, 'a monster in human form', whose daughter Baiza Bai he married, Daulat Rao 'let loose on Poona the fury of hell'. Nana Fadnavis was arrested and kept in confinement (1798).

The first serious blow at Daulat Rao's power came from

the widows of Mahadji Sindhia. They demanded sufficient independent provision to be ensured for their maintenance. Sharza Rao Ghatge, deputed by Daulat Rao to settle the matter, publicly insulted the ladies. A wave of horror moved Sindhia's army where the ladies had many sympathisers. Two of the widows launched a regular civil war which continued for four years. It covered an extensive area from Poona and Kolhapur to Malwa and Bundelkhand. It ended in 1801 after a temporary truce in 1799.

In 1797 Daulat Rao, taking advantage of Tukoji Holkar's death, revived Mahadji's policy of weakening the house of Holkar. He took up the cause of the imbecile Kashi Rao Holkar whose claim to succession was not recognized by the other Holkars. One of them was killed in a military engagement. Another was captured, brought to Poona and trampled to death by an elephant under the orders of Baji Rao II. By committing himself to support Daulat Rao's nominee the Peshwa failed to exercise impartially the suzerain's prerogative of settling the disputed question of succession.

Yashwant Rao Holkar

The adherents of the house of Holkar were mobilised by Tukoji's illegitimate son Yashwant Rao. He laid waste Sindhia's territory in Malwa, collected men and money, and crowned himself (January 1799). Sindhia left Poona two years later (November 1800), proceeded northward in a leisurely manner, and sent his battalions in small batches to oppose Holkar. The latter destroyed them piecemeal, won battles at Newri and Satwas, and finally captured Ujjain, Sindhia's capital, with the help of the Pindari leader Amir Khan (July 1801). Sindhia summoned his forces from Khandesh and Maharashtra, defeated Holkar at Indore, scattered his troops and captured his guns. His indolence after victory provided an opportunity for Holkar to slip away to Khandesh, raise another army and invade the Deccan (1802).

Baji Rao's flight

Yashwant's new policy was to put pressure on the Peshwa to declare the infant Khande Rao, one of his nephews, as the head of the Holkar State. Yashwant was to be his guardian; he was to enjoy parity with Sindhia in Hindustan, thus sharing his conquests. Baji Rao had neither the statesmanship nor the courage to devise a solution of the hereditary rivalry between Sindhia and Holkar. It was the traditional policy of the Peshwas

never to settle a dispute finally; by keeping two separate and rival authorities in the same region they kept in their own hands the balance of power. Moreover, Baji Rao feared that Yashwant 'nursed in his heart a silent but sleepless thirst of vengeance' for the cruel and humiliating death which he had inflicted on his brother.

Towards the middle of 1802 Holkar's troops began operations in Khandesh and Maharashtra. Sindhia's troops arrived soon afterwards. The combined forces of Sindhia and the Peshwa were severely defeated by Holkar at the battle of Hadapsar near Poona (October 1802). 'It was a decisive victory for Holkar; in one day Sindhia's paramount power and prestige were destroyed beyond repair. The Maratha capital and its master lay prostrate before the victor'.

The war was extended to the interior of Maharashtra; it inflicted unspeakable misery on the people. Sindhia, who had not left Ujjain, was personally safe there. But Baji Rao, following his father's example, began negotiations with the English on the day of the battle and abandoned Poona long before Sindhia's army had been destroyed. He fled to the Konkan to avoid Holkar's pursuing bands, took refuge in an English ship and landed at Bassein (December 1802). There, on the last day of the year, he signed the treaty of Bassein which took away his independence.

2. LORD WELLESLEY (1798-1805)

Exclusion of the French

Sir John Shore's successor, Lord Mornington, assumed charge in May 1798. He was created Marquess of Wellesley on the defeat of Tipu. He was a good classical scholar, and well acquainted with Indian affairs by virtue of his experience as a member of the Board of Control. He was gifted with rare political insight. In India he displayed a rare capacity to use war and diplomacy as instruments of policy.

Wellesley's Governor-Generalship synchronized with a critical phase of England's struggle in Europe against Revolutionary and Napoleonic France. The First Coalition, in which England was an ally of Austria, Prussia, Holland, Spain and Sardinia, came to an inglorious end with the treaty of Campo Formio (October 1797), and England was left alone to deal with France. Napoleon invaded Egypt (1798). Nelson's victory in the battle

of the Nile (August 1798) gave England control of the Mediterranean and prepared the ground for the Second Coalition in which England was allied with Russia, Austria and Turkey. In 1799 Napoleon became the dictator of France as First Consul. The Second Coalition collapsed in 1801, and the Second Armed Neutrality (1800), formed by Russia, Prussia, Denmark and Sweden, threatened England with war. The treaty of Amiens (1802) established peace, but war was renewed in 1803 and the threat of a Napoleonic invasion kept England uneasy during the years 1803-5. Napoleon became Emperor of France in 1804. The Third Coalition (1805) followed; England was allied with Russia, Austria and Sweden. The battle of Trafalgar (1805) was a great naval victory for England; but it cost her the life of Nelson, and it was followed by the death of the great minister Younger Pitt (1806).

During these years 'the British governing class were nervous with apprehension and tense with resolution'. Napoleon's Egyptian expedition was looked upon as a threat to the British power in India; it set all the British authorities in India on the alert. Although French political power in India had been destroyed during the Seven Years' War, from the days of Warren Hastings to those of Wellesley 'the Indian courts were full of Frenchmen, commanding large or small bodies of sepoy, and eager for the most part to serve their country by the exercise of their profession'. Several anti-British projects were made by Rene Medec, Begam Samru and Chevalier, head of French affairs in Bengal. St. Lubin and Montigny made tall promises at Poona. Bussy's expedition of 1782 arrived too late. Sindhia's army was trained, organized and led by French generals. The Nizam followed Sindhia. Tipu had contact with the French.

This was the situation which determined Wellesley's policy on his arrival in India. He decided that 'all traces of French influence must be swept from India in order to allow no foothold to an invading army'. The submission of the Nizam and the conquest of Mysore, followed by the submission of the Peshwa, encouraged him to extend the dimensions of his policy. The exclusion of the French was a negative idea. Its successful implementation led to the positive idea of elevating the Company to the position of paramount power in India. The shifting policies of the 'Country Powers' could not establish political stability in the sub-continent. The lack of a long-term balance of power created a political vacuum which could be filled up

by the Company's paramountcy. This was 'a more ambitious view of British dominion' than had been entertained by his predecessors. This position was to be secured, as he himself said, through the establishment of 'a comprehensive system of alliances and political relations over every region of Hindustan and the Deccan'. Where diplomacy failed war would follow. This programme was a clear repudiation of the directive in Pitt's India Act (1784) regarding 'schemes of conquest and extension of territory in India'. But the 'Home' authorities condoned his 'war-loving' policy as long as it produced success; they recalled him only when it seemed to fail.

Treaties with Nizam (1798, 1800)

Nizam Ali was pushed into the British net by the Marathas through their Pyrrhic victory at Kharda (1795) and Shore's policy of Non-intervention. He turned his eyes to his French officers to whom he handed over the training of his troops. But he soon became suspicious of these officers, particularly of their leader Raymond, and as a counterpoise to the French, he raised a separate corps of sepoys under an American and an Irish officer. He was mollified by British help given to him during the rebellion of his son Ali Jah. Raymond's death in 1798 weakened the pro-French party in his court.

Wellesley did not find it very difficult to make him agree to the replacement of the French-trained battalions by British troops. A treaty made in 1798 provided that 'the permanent subsidiary force' stationed in the Nizam's dominions would be maintained at his cost. It could be used for suppressing internal rebellion, but not for collection of revenues. No Frenchman was to be entertained in the service of the Nizam or allowed to remain in any part of his dominions. The same restriction would apply to other Europeans, but it could be removed in any particular case with the knowledge and consent of the British Government. All differences between the Nizam and the Peshwa were to be adjusted according to British advice. 'No correspondence on affairs of importance' was to be carried on with the Peshwa either by the Nizam or by the Company 'without the mutual privity and consent of both parties'. This did not mean surrender by the Nizam of his external independence except in regard to his relations with the Peshwa.

The French-trained battalions were disarmed and the possibility of any infiltration of 'the most virulent principles

of Jacobinism' in the Nizam's army was completely eliminated. Wellesley boasted of his 'gentle conquest of an army of 14,000 men under the command of French officers in the service of the Nizam'.

The treaty of 1798 was 'of a temporary nature and contracted for a special purpose', viz., the impending war against Tipu. In that war the Nizam proved his loyalty to the British cause and received as his reward a part of Tipu's dominions. It was now considered necessary to 'extend the basis' of the treaty, 'to make it generally defensive against all powers, and, in fact, to take the Nizam under the protection of the British Government'.

These purposes were served by a new treaty concluded in 1800. The Company assumed full control over the Nizam's external relations. He was 'neither to commence nor to pursue in future any negotiations with any other power whatever without giving previous notice and entering into mutual consultations with the British Government'. All differences between the Nizam and any other power would be subject to 'adjustment' by the Company. His 'rights' and territories would be 'maintained and defended' by the Company against 'any act of unprovoked hostility or aggression'. He was assured of full internal independence: he would be 'absolute' with respect to his 'children, relations, or servants'. The strength of the subsidiary force was increased. To ensure regular payment of the force the Nizam was required to cede to the Company the territories which he had acquired from Mysore by the treaty of Seringapatam (1792) and the partition treaty made after the fall of Tipu (1799).

3. FALL OF TIPU (1799)

Tipu did not accept the treaty of Seringapatam (1792) as the final settlement of his political relations with the Company. He was determined to recover the lost ground. He strengthened the fortifications of Seringapatam, reorganized his cavalry and infantry, and encouraged cultivation in his dominions to strengthen his economic resources. 'Instead of sinking under his misfortunes he exerted all his activity to repair the ravages of war'.

Wellesley took notice of Tipu's 'intrigues at the court of Hyderabad' and his 'embassy' to Zaman Shah of Kabul; but far more ominous from the British point of view was his attempt

to establish contact with France. He made himself a member of the Jacobin Club in Paris. He allowed some Frenchmen in his service to plant a 'Tree of Liberty' at Seringapatam. The French governor of Mauritius issued a proclamation inviting volunteers to come to Tipu's aid against the English. A few French soldiers—less than a hundred in number—reached Mauritius. This episode disclosed that the connection between Tipu and the French was very trifling and their mode of intercourse childish; there was really no serious possibility of an effective alliance. Tipu's emissaries were sent to Versailles, Constantinople, Arabia and Kabul. Their efforts were unlikely to secure material aid for him.

Wellesley took an alarmist view of Tipu's preparations for war. He was convinced that Tipu entertained 'implacable sentiments of revenge' against the English. He accused him of 'having entered into offensive and defensive engagements with the enemy' (i.e., the French). He accused him also of 'having proceeded to collect, in conjunction with the enemy, a force openly destined to act against the possessions of the Company'. The Court of Directors wrote to the Governor-General that the French might employ Tipu as 'the fittest instrument' for the furtherance of their 'ambitious projects'. It was apprehended that a French fleet might sail for India by way of the Red Sea or by Basra after the conquest of Egypt. But Nelson's victory over the French fleet at the battle of the Nile (August 1798) removed all possibilities of such a daring adventure.

However, in order to meet these hypothetical dangers Wellesley at first tried to secure the alliance of the Marathas and the Nizam as Cornwallis had done in 1790. At Poona Peshwa Baji Rao II was smarting under the control of Daulat Rao Sindhia, and Nana Fadnavis was in confinement. Wellesley realized that the Marathas were not in a position to intervene on behalf of Tipu even though the English could not expect direct aid from them. He took care to ensure their neutrality by promising them a share of the spoils of war. The Nizam became an active ally of the Company through the treaty of 1798.

Fourth Anglo-Mysore War (1799)

War was preceded by negotiations. Wellesley wanted a final solution of the Mysore question. 'He demanded absolute submission from Tipu, and swept aside the latter's temporizing letters as insolent evasion'.

The campaign was brief but decisive. Tipu had to fight

without aid from any ally, and before his preparations were complete. The Marathas remained aloof; the Nizam's forces fought on the British side, but their role was not effective. After suffering two defeats Tipu took shelter in the defences of Seringapatam. He fell fighting bravely (May 1799). His sons surrendered, and the rule of the dynasty came to an end.

Results of war

The victor distributed the spoils. To the Nizam were given some districts of Mysore. These were, however, made over to the English by his treaty of 1800. A share was offered to the Marathas, but they refused to accept it. The English took Kanara and some other districts including Seringapatam; the entire sea coast of the Kingdom of Mysore fell into their hands. The remaining parts of Tipu's territory were made over to a boy of the old Hindu (Wodiyar) dynasty. A subsidiary treaty (1799) reduced the truncated State of Mysore to the position of a dependency of the Company. The Company acquired the right 'to undertake the defence and to garrison all fortresses and strong places in the Mysore territory'. This arrangement would enable the Company, as Wellesley observed, 'to command the whole resources of the Raja's territory'. After the cession of the Nizam's share in 1800 Mysore was 'entirely encircled' by British territory. The Company's dominions extended 'from sea to sea across the base of the peninsula'. 'Thus it was made certain that no ruler should arise in Mysore like Tipu who could intervene in a contest of sea-power, or hold out a hand to European enemies of England to give a landing for troops which might threaten British power in the south of India, as it had been threatened in the days of La Bourdonnais and Dupleix'.

Wellesley's achievement in the first year of his government was summarised as follows: 'Our principal ally, the Nizam, was restored to us; the French State growing in the peninsula of India was destroyed; our formidable native enemy Tipu, the ally of the French, was subdued'. He had his reward from his masters; he was elevated to the rank of Marquess in the peerage of Ireland.

Haidar and Tipu had been the most persistent antagonists of the English. The complete collapse of their powerful State, preceded by the position of dependence accepted by the Nizam, and followed by the take-over of the Nawab of Arcot's territories, left the Marathas completely isolated and exposed to

the Company's concentrated onslaught. The fall of Mysore was a prelude to the fall of the Maratha Empire.

Estimate of Tipu

In political as also in military matters Tipu was less sagacious than his father. His lack of political foresight and diplomatic ability is evident from his failure to prevent the Marathas and the Nizam going against him. A single-handed struggle against the English was heroic indeed, but it was destined to fail. His halting efforts to secure French aid provoked English suspicion without bringing any material benefit. His military position was weakened by his neglect of cavalry. He placed too much reliance on the defences of Seringapatam without realizing that his capital could not stand a British assault.

In personal life Tipu was a pious Muslim, less tolerant than his father, and a persecutor of his Hindu subjects in certain cases. But he knew how to placate Hindu opinion, as his Sringeri letters indicate. His administration was praised by some English observers. Sir John Shore testified to his care for the peasantry. Some of his reforms were, however, no more than hasty innovations. Stories of his cruelty circulated by Englishmen were often baseless or exaggerated.

Arcot, Tanjore and Surat

On Umdat-ul-Umara's death in 1801 Wellesley reversed Shore's policy. His successor was granted a pension and allowed to retain nominal sovereignty; the administration of his dominions was transferred to the Company. This was done by the treaty of 1801. Wellesley described this arrangement as 'perhaps the most salutary and useful measure which has been adopted since the acquisition of the Dewani of Bengal'. Instead of acting in a straightforward manner he accused the dead Nawabs—Muhammad Ali and Umdat-ul-Umara—of having carried on secret correspondence with Tipu. This charge was based on some papers found at Seringapatam after Tipu's fall. This evidence was of doubtful authenticity. The Nawabs, Wellesley argued, were not independent princes; they had been established and maintained by the Company. This is historically correct; but the Company had treated them as independent princes for about half a century.

The policy of taking over the administration and compensating the rulers with pensions and empty titles was applied to two other States. One of them was the Maratha principality of Tanjore where Wellesley took advantage of a disputed succes-

sion (1799). At Surat the Nawab was in charge of civil administration and the Company was responsible for defence. As the Nawab could not pay the expenses of defence Wellesley took over the administration of the city (1800).

Oudh

Wellesley's policy towards Oudh was determined primarily by the ostensible needs of defence. There was no charge of contact with the French, or of disloyalty as there was in the case of Arcot. There was no default in payment of the subsidy although it was disproportionately heavy in relation to the total revenues of the Nawab's dominions. But Wellesley demanded an increase in the subsidy for the maintenance of a larger body of the Company's troops on the pretext of the danger from Zaman Shah of Kabul. The Nawab's troops, described as a 'rabble force', could not defend Oudh, which was a buffer State from the Company's point of view, against any invader from the north-west. The possibility of an Afghan thrust into Oudh was extremely remote. The Afghan territories on the north-west were separated from the heart of India by the territories of the Sikh *Misls* in the Punjab and the Maratha stronghold in Delhi. In any case, it was unjust to impose a permanent financial burden on the Nawab with a view to meeting a hypothetical danger. It was a violation of the treaty of 1798 which allowed, at the most, occasional increase.

Wellesley's real purpose was to reduce the Nawab of Oudh to the position of the pensionary Nawab of Arcot. But there was no excuse for such a drastic measure. So he compelled the Nawab to sign a treaty (1801) surrendering Rohilkhand and the Lower Doab—the large and fertile tract lying between the Jumna and the Ganges—as also Gorakhpur. This arrangement secured the 'rectification' of the Company's frontier and the 'territorial isolation of the Nawab': his territories were surrounded by British territories on all sides except the north. The treaty also required the Nawab to 'act in conformity to the counsel of the officers of the Company' in the administration of his truncated State. Thus the Company secured 'the positive right of interference in the internal management' of Oudh. Nothing, however, was done to improve the administration of the State.

Missions to Persia and Burma

One aspect of Wellesley's anti-French policy is revealed in his diplomatic contact with two foreign countries. In 1799 he sent Malcolm, one of the ablest of the Company's officers, to

Persia. The envoy arranged two treaties (1801). The first made provision for the establishment of English factories in Persia ; it also spoke of the cession of islands in the Persian Gulf to the Company. The second was directed against the aggressions of Afghanistan and the extension of French influence in Persia. These treaties yielded little political dividend. Persia, suffering heavily from Russian aggression, appealed for French help in 1805. England was then an ally of Russia in the Third Coalition. Persia became open to French officers and French influence.

Burma was a powerful kingdom in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The first English mission to Burma, led by Captain Symes, was sent by Sir John Shore in 1795. The French had commercial interests in Burma ; they also aimed at political penetration. In 1802 Wellesley sent Symes again to Burma. A French ship carrying a letter from the governor of Mauritius reached Burma about the same time. The French had designs on the coastal region of Pegu which they might use as a base of operations against the English in Bengal. The King openly referred to the English with contempt and betrayed his pro-French inclination. Wellesley's anticipation that there would be a civil war in Burma, providing an opportunity for the conclusion of a Subsidiary Alliance, was not fulfilled. Symes returned empty-handed. Another mission was led by Lieutenant Canning in 1803. It appeared that the King was not prepared either to enter into a specific treaty with the French or grant them any territorial concession. As a matter of fact the French never made any serious attempt to secure a firm footing in Burma.

Wellesley's grand projects

After the fall of Tipu Wellesley contemplated the conquest of the French islands, the capture of Batavia, and an expedition directed against the French in Egypt. The first two projects had to be abandoned. The third took a minor shape ; a force was sent from India to join Abercromby's expedition to Egypt. The treaty of Amiens (1802) stipulated for the retrocession of the French and Dutch factories in India. But Wellesley apprehended early renewal of war and delayed retrocession. The result was that the factories remained in English hands till war broke out again.

4. SECOND ANGLO-MARATHA WAR (1803-5)

Treaty of Bassein (1802)

In Baji Rao II's unwise flight to Bassein (December 1802) Wellesley found 'a very favourable opportunity for establishing in the most complete manner the interests of the British power in the Maratha Empire'. The desperate and helpless Peshwa was induced—by persuasion and threat—to sign a treaty on 31 December 1802. It was described as a treaty of 'general defensive alliance'. It provided that a subsidiary force would be stationed permanently in the Peshwa's territories, and for its maintenance he would cede to the Company in perpetuity districts yielding an annual income of 26 *lakhs*. This force was to be employed not only to resist external invasion but also to suppress internal disorder. The Peshwa surrendered his right over the city of Surat and his claim for *chauth* on the Nizam's dominions. He undertook to abstain from war on the Nizam and the Gaikwar who were allies of the Company. His differences with these two rulers would be submitted to the Company's arbitration. He engaged not to enter into negotiations with 'any power whatever' without previous consultation with the British Government. No European belonging to a nation at war with England was to be employed in the Peshwa's service. Such was the price which Baji Rao paid for the assurance that the English would protect his territories as their own.

A year later (December 1803) eight supplementary articles were added to the treaty of Bassein, by which certain territories ceded to the Company were restored to the Peshwa and some changes were made regarding the subsidiary force.

It has been said that the 'treaty of Bassein gave the Company the supremacy of the Deccan'. The Peshwa's submission alone could not make the Company supreme in the Deccan. But the treaty, preceded by the submission of the Nizam, the fall of Tipu and the annexation of the dominions of the Nawab of Arcot, did confer upon the Company 'the supremacy of the Deccan'. The interests of Sindhia, Holkar and Bhonsle were really concentrated in North India. Malcolm, a competent contemporary observer, says that the treaty was intended merely 'to restore the efficiency of the Peshwa's Government against the other Maratha powers', not 'to govern the Maratha Empire through the Peshwa'. The Peshwa had long ceased to be the

de facto head of the Maratha Empire, and it was not possible to govern it through him. Barlow, a future Governor-General, highly exaggerated the importance of the treaty when he observed: 'The restoration of the head of the Maratha Empire to his government through the influence of the British power ... has placed all the remaining States of India in dependent relation to the British Government'.

Castlereagh, who was President of the Board of Control at the time, criticised the treaty of Bassein in 1804 on several grounds, including the violation of the provisions of Pitt's India Act (1784) and the Charter Act of 1793 which imposed restrictions on 'guaranteeing the possession of any prince or State'. Politically speaking, the immediate effect of the treaty was, as he anticipated, to involve the Company in the 'endless and complicated distractions of the turbulent Maratha Empire'. Wellesley informed the Directors that war was not likely to follow. But the principal Maratha rulers took to arms: Sindhia and Bhonsle in 1803, Holkar in 1804.

Meanwhile the Company had intervened in a disputed succession in Gujarat (1802) among members of the Gaikwar family, sent military aid to one of the claimants, and secured from him—through a subsidiary treaty—the cession of a large slice of territory and the right to supervise the political affairs of the State. Anand Rao Gaikwar undertook to maintain a subsidiary force and to submit to the Company's control his relations with other States, including his differences with the Peshwa.

Prelude to war

In May 1803 Baji Rao was restored to power at Poona by British troops under the command of General Arthur Wellesley, the Governor-General's brother, who later became well-known as the Duke of Wellington. He first came into prominence as the commander of the Hyderabad contingent in the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War (1799). Then he played a prominent role in co-operation with the Resident, Colonel Close, and the *Dewan*, Purnaiya, in settling the affairs of the new Mysore State. 'He was the real hero of the re-establishment of Mysore as a Hindu State'.

Arthur Wellesley's idea of a proper political system for India was as follows: 'There should be one power which, either by the superiority of its strength, its military system, or its resources, shall preponderate and be able to protect all (powers)'.

This position was nearly attained by the Company towards the middle of 1803. The British contingents stationed at Poona, in Mysore and Hyderabad, together with the British forces in Bombay and Madras, formed a chain of defence stretching across the peninsula from Bombay to Masulipatam. Politically and militarily the Maratha chiefs other than the Peshwa were placed in a very difficult position. In North India the British held the lower Ganges valley in firm control, large British contingents were stationed at Lucknow, and there were subsidiary troops in Gujarat.

Baji Rao's acceptance of British protection provoked anger and dismay in the Maratha world. Yashwant Rao Holkar, who had been in occupation of Poona since his victory at Hadapsar (October 1802), left the capital and proceeded towards the north (March 1803). He declared that the Peshwa had sold the Maratha Empire to the British. Daulat Rao Sindhia and Raghuji Bhonsle realized that they were now face to face with the British power, for the treaty of Bassein provided for British arbitration between the Peshwa and the other Indian powers. As Sindhia had a strong army of trained battalions and was capable of offering serious opposition to the Company, Wellesley used pressure tactics to secure his assent to the treaty of Bassein. It was also a part of the Governor-General's plan to destroy the French party at Sindhia's court. However, his attempt failed. Bhonsle also refused to give his accord to the treaty. Sindhia and Bhonsle met and tried to organize a broad-based coalition against the Company. They failed to win over Holkar to their side; he kept aloof because he believed that Sindhia, if successful in re-establishing his influence at Poona, would undertake a war of extermination against him. A letter written by Sindhia to the Peshwa revealed his deceitful intention. The primary responsibility for keeping Holkar aloof from the coalition rests on Sindhia. On the whole a general combination of the Maratha powers was frustrated by the withdrawal of Holkar to Malwa and Gaikwar's neutrality.

Along with diplomatic moves the Governor-General matured his plans for war. His objects included the destruction of the influence which French adventurers in Sindhia's service—Perron and others—then possessed in North India and the establishment of British control over the Delhi-Agra region and the Emperor. He also desired to establish a geographical link between the British territories in Bengal and Madras by occupying

Bhonsle's territory in Orissa. War was to be conducted on two principal fronts—in the Deccan under Arthur Wellesley and in North India under Lord Lake, the Commander-in-Chief. Subsidiary campaigns were planned in Gujarat to acquire Broach, in Bundelkhand to secure the southern frontier of Hindustan, and in Orissa.

Arthur Wellesley's victories (1803)

War was declared in August 1803.

In the Deccan Arthur Wellesley fought against Sindhia and Bhonsle in the face of several difficulties. His campaigns covered a broken, war-wasted and famine-stricken country; provisions were scarce, and the local Maratha population was hostile. But his operations were speedily successful. He occupied Ahmadnagar (August 1803), Sindhia's great arsenal and treasure-house, before the latter made his first move. He broke the combined armies of Sindhia and Bhonsle at Assaye (September 1803), north of Aurangabad. This victory did not crush Sindhia's power, but it demonstrated the superiority of the British army and caused a final breach between Sindhia and Bhonsle. Sindhia deserted Bhonsle at Argaon (east of Burhanpur) where the latter suffered a defeat (November 1803). The strong fortress of Gawilgarh, where Bhonsle had stored his treasure, fell (December 1803). Puri and Cuttack had already been occupied by British forces (September 1803). Meanwhile Sindhia had lost Burhanpur and Asirgarh (October 1803).

Wellesley's spectacular success was won 'as much by clever diplomacy as by the sheer weight of arms'. The desertion of Sindhia's European commanders, which was one of the prime causes of his defeat, was largely due to the diplomatic manoeuvres of the British. From the purely military point of view Assaye and Laswari (where Lord Lake defeated Sindhia) proved that the replacement of the traditional Maratha system of war by the imported western system could not bring victory. By neglecting the cavalry and relying upon the ill-disciplined and ill-equipped infantry, which was led by undependable European officers, the Marathas practically made disaster inevitable. The rupture between Sindhia and Bhonsle was a grave political mistake; the separation of their forces was a fatal blow to the common cause.

Treaty of Deogaon (1803)

Raghuji Bhonsle was the first to recognize the futility of continuing the war. By the treaty of Deogaon (17 December

1803) he ceded Orissa to the Company, and to the Nizam all his territory west of the Wardha river and south of the hills on which Narnala and Gawailgarh stood. He renounced his alliance with Sindhia and engaged himself not to assist any chief hostile to the English. He agreed to submit all his disputes with other powers to British arbitration and never to take or retain in his service the subject of any European or American power or any British subject (whether European or Indian) without the consent of the British Government.

'French State' in North India

By acquiring from the Nawab of Oudh (1801) Rohilkhand, the Lower Doab and Gorakhpur, and from the Bangash Nawab the district of Farrukhabad (1802), Lord Wellesley had created an excellent base for the Company's power in North India. Within a brief period these 'Ceded Districts', under the firm administration of the Governor-General's brother Henry Wellesley, became a prosperous region.

One of Lord Wellesley's principal political aims was the destruction of 'the French State now formed on the banks of the Jumna', as he called Perron's viceroyalty in North India which was nominally a part of Sindhia's dominions. The 'Ceded Districts' were contiguous to Perron's territory. Perron, a Frenchman, joined Mahadji Sindhia's service as a subordinate of De Boigne in 1789. By 1801 he had succeeded in securing charge of Sindhia's most important forts in Hindustan, including Delhi, Agra, Aligarh and Ajmer, and also the office of Sindhia's *subahdar* of the Delhi province. His triumph over George Thomas in the Cis-Sutlej region increased his power. He became supreme commander of Daulat Rao Sindhia's army in 1802.

Perron governed Sindhia's North Indian dominions, but he was not loyal to his master. His main purpose was to pile up fortune to be carried home; the English wrongly suspected him to be an agent of the French Government. Under him De Boigne's splendid army grew in size but deteriorated in quality. He knew that it could not stand up to the British Indian army.

Lord Lake's victories (1803)

As soon as war was declared against Sindhia and Bhonsle, Lake marched from Kanpur towards Aligarh, Perron's headquarters. The city of Koil, as also the adjoining fort of Aligarh, were taken (August-September 1803). Perron, who had been

in secret contact with the British, fled from Koil and took no part in the defence of Aligarh. He found shelter in British territory. His cowardly conduct destroyed the French military prestige in India. The chiefs of Hindustan now came forward to join the English cause. Lake could count on a plentiful supply of provisions and support from friendly chiefs all along his route.

Advancing towards Delhi, Lake defeated Bourquien, the French commander of Sindhia's troops at the imperial capital, at Patparganj (September 1803), destroyed Perron's entire field army, and occupied the city. Shah Alam came under British protection (16 September 1803). All the French officers of the Maratha army in Delhi, including Bourquien, surrendered and were sent away to Calcutta.

From Delhi Lake set out for Agra. The defence of the fort was in charge of Sindhia's European officers. It surrendered (October 1803); the immense wealth and armament stored there fell into British hands.

Meanwhile Sindhia had sent to Hindustan thirteen choice battalions of the original brigades trained by De Boigne. Immediately after their arrival in the Agra district (October 1803) their supreme commander, Chevalier Dudrenec, deserted to the English with two other European officers. Ambaji Ingle, one of Sindhia's leading chiefs in Hindustan and a rival of Perron, entered into treacherous negotiations with the British. He sent his sepoys to the battle of Laswari while he himself remained safe in the rear and made his escape at the first opportunity.

At Laswari (east of Alwar city) Lake was confronted by Sindhia's thirteen battalions, commanded by Sarwar Khan in the absence of any European officer, and equipped with 72 guns. The British victory (November 1803) was complete. Lake justly claimed that it ended in the 'annihilation of the whole of the regular forces in Sindhia's service commanded by French officers'. He also remarked that 'if they had been commanded by French officers the event would have been extremely doubtful'.

Subsidiary campaigns (1803)

In Gujarat Sindhia's troops lost Broach, the fort of Pawa-garh and the town of Champaner (August-September 1803). In Bundelkhand the British captured Kalpi (December 1803). Ambaji Ingle made a treaty of alliance (December 1803) which

led to the surrender of the fort of Gwalior to the British (February 1804).

Sindhia's treaties (1803, 1804, 1805)

'The rapidity of the conquests and the speedy termination of the war surprised all India'. Sindhia made peace a fortnight after Bhonsle. By the treaty of Surji Anjangaon (30 December 1803) he ceded to the Company and its allies all his territories, forts and rights in the Ganges-Jumna Doab, his rights and claims in the countries lying north of the Jaipur and Jodhpur States, as also the territory of the Rana of Gohad. He also ceded to the Company the forts of Broach and Ahmadnagar and their dependent territory, as also the lands lying south of the Ajanta hills. He renounced all claims upon the Company, the Nizam, the Peshwa, the Gaikwar, and the Emperor Shah Alam II. He confirmed all the treaties made by the British Government with his feudatories. He agreed to abide by the Company's decision in his disputes with the Peshwa about their respective rights in Malwa and elsewhere. He engaged never to take or retain in his service any European or American or British Indian subject without the consent of the British Government. His only gain was the restoration by the Company of Asirgarh, Burhanpur and Pawagarh with their dependencies.

By another treaty concluded at Burhanpur (February 1804) Sindhia accepted the Subsidiary Alliance with two special conditions. The subsidiary troops were to be stationed, not within his territory, but at such place near his frontier as the British Government might decide. He was not required to pay the expenses of these troops. At that time Sindhia was apprehensive of an attack by Holkar. After Wellesley's resignation his successor, Cornwallis, treated this treaty as a dead letter, but it was not formally denounced.

In November 1805 Sindhia concluded another treaty with the Company at Mustafapur. Gohad and the fort of Gwalior were restored to him; but he renounced his claims on the territories north of the Chambal. The Company engaged not to enter into treaties with Udaipur, Jodhpur and Kota and not to make claims on the territories south of the Chambal.

Holkar's war (1804-5)

The Company's war with Sindhia and Bhonsle was the source of Yashwant Rao Holkar's 'new-born greatness'. His standard became the common rallying point of all the dis-

banded soldiery of upper India and of all lawless adventurers who were hungry for plunder. He had 60,000 horsemen and an imposing park of artillery. 'He had no settled government. His empire was the empire of the saddle'. He was proud of his power. He warned the British that, if his demands were not met, 'countries of many hundred *kos* should be overrun and plundered and burnt ... (by his army) which overwhelms like the waves of the sea'.

After the defeat of Sindhia and Bhonsle he tried to form a coalition of Indian rulers against the Company. He entered into secret correspondence with the Rajput Rajas and the Sikh chiefs. He tried to persuade Sindhia to withdraw from the British connection. Afraid that he should now be singled out for attack by the British, he negotiated with them also, but his demands were extravagant. Early in 1804 he alienated the Company by plundering Pushkar and Ajmer, by ravaging the territory of the Raja of Jaipur who had become an ally of the British in 1803, and by murdering three of his British officers. Wellesley declared war against him in April 1804.

The Governor-General thought that one action would be sufficient to destroy Holkar's army and reduce the 'predatory power' which threatened peace. Arthur Wellesley held the opinion that it would be no more than a '*poligar* war' and should not last even a fortnight. With Lake operating from North India, Arthur Wellesley advancing from the Deccan, and Murray marching from Gujarat, it was hoped to surround Holkar from different sides. But Monson, acting under Lake, was defeated by Holkar in the Mukund Dara pass, south of Kota in Rajasthan, and beat a disorderly retreat to Agra (August 1804). Holkar's army made an attack on Delhi; it was repulsed by the British. Holkar himself was routed at Farrukhabad (November 1804). He secured aid from the Jat Raja Ranjit Singh and found shelter in the Jat fort of Dig. The fort was soon captured by the British (December 1804). The remnant of Holkar's army took shelter in the fort of Bharatpur. The fort stood a long siege by Lake; although he failed to capture it, Ranjit Singh concluded a treaty (April 1805). He paid a large indemnity, surrendered the fortress of Dig, and renounced his alliance with the enemies of the Company.

After a fruitless attempt at *rapprochement* with Sindhia, Holkar proceeded towards the Punjab expecting aid from the Sikh Maharaja Ranjit Singh. But he had to conclude the treaty

of Rajpurghat (on the Beas) with Lake (December 1805). By that time Lord Wellesley had resigned. Holkar renounced all his rights in the region to the north of the Chambal and all his political claims on Bundelkhand. He engaged not to employ any European in his service without the consent of the British Government. The Company agreed not to interfere in Holkar's territories south of the Chambal and also to restore the forts and territories belonging to the Holkar family in the Deccan with some exceptions. This arrangement was modified later, and certain territories in Rajasthan—Tonk, Rampura and the districts north of the Bundi hills—were restored to Holkar.

Lord Wellesley's recall

In Europe the French war had broken out into fresh fury after the failure of the treaty of Amiens in 1803 and Napoleon's plans for the invasion of England alarmed the British Government. In India Wellesley had involved the Company in a war which appeared unlikely to end speedily. Monson's disaster at Mukund Dara pass and Lake's failure at Bharatpur (where 3,203 men including 103 European officers were killed and wounded) seemed to show that Wellesley was attempting a task beyond the Company's capacity. Political opinion in England turned against Wellesley's 'war-provoking' policy. The Prime Minister, Younger Pitt, said that he 'could not be suffered to remain in the Government'. The Directors could not but be uneasy because the expenses were increasing. The Company's debt rose from 17 millions in 1797 to 31 millions in 1806. They had been offended by the imperious Governor-General's ill-concealed contempt for their opinions and directives. They disliked his advocacy of private trade at the cost of the Company's commercial monopoly. As a necessary preliminary to a change of policy it was decided to replace Wellesley by a new Governor-General. So Wellesley resigned (July 1805).

Lord Wellesley: estimate

Lord Wellesley's political achievement is best summarized in the well-known statement that during his administration the British Empire in India became the British Empire of India. He tamed the Nizam. He crushed Tipu. He delivered shattering blows at the political pre-eminence and military power of the Marathas. He made the puppet Mughal Emperor a protege of the Company. He acquired for the Company extensive territories at the cost of Mysore, the Nawabs of Arcot and Oudh.

and the Maratha chiefs. His premature resignation left his work unfinished; after an interval of a few years Lord Hastings completed the execution of his imperial projects.

While extending British dominion in India by well-planned political and military measures he sought its consolidation through the improvement of administration. He wrote that the stability of the empire 'must be secured by the durable principles of internal order; by pure, upright and uniform administration of justice; by a prudent and temperate system of revenue'. His primary interest in matters of high policy did not close his eyes to the importance of administrative consolidation. By establishing the Fort William College in Calcutta for the training of fresh civilians coming from England he gave the Company's Civil Service a new complexion. He improved the judicial system by constituting the *Sadar Dewani Adalat* and the *Sadar Nizamat Adalat* with separate Judges who replaced the Governor-General in Council.

Lord Wellesley was 'a statesman of marvellous vision, organizing power, and skill in choosing the fittest instruments for his purpose'. He selected promising youngmen for responsible posts. Munro, Malcolm, Metcalfe, Elphinstone—great names in British Indian history—practically began their careers under him, and from him they derived the inspiration which shaped them in their impressionable years. Malcolm says: 'His great mind pervaded the whole, and a portion of his spirit was infused into every agent whom he employed'. A new administrative tradition was initiated during his regime. If Lord Hastings completed the task of empire-building left unfinished by Lord Wellesley, he found in the civil and military officers trained under the latter able instruments and sagacious advisers.

4. SUBSIDIARY ALLIANCE

Before Wellesley

Although Lord Wellesley used Subsidiary Alliance for the purpose of imperial expansion and consolidation, he was not its originator. The Nizam's treaty of December 1753 with the French, making over to them the 'Northern Sarkars' for the support of their army, was 'the first instance of Subsidiary Alliance in a rudimentary form'. The Company's pre-Plassey treaty with Mir Jafar (May 1757) turned the Nawab of Bengal into 'a mediatised Indian ruler subject to British control, exactly of

the type created by the subsidiary system ascribed to Wellesley'. There were only two differences. There was no assignment of territory for the maintenance of a subsidiary force, and there was no explicit ban on the employment of Europeans by the Nawab.

The main features of the Wellesley system had been introduced into the Company's relations with the Nawabs of Arcot and Oudh before 1798. Muhammad Ali owed his accession to the throne of Arcot to the consistent support of the British. Despite his military dependence upon the Company even after the recognition of his position by the Anglo-French treaty of Paris (1763), his internal autonomy and external relations were not subject to formal treaty restrictions. He received at his court a regular ambassador accredited from the King of England, and his status as an independent ruler was recognized by an English court in 1793. But by a treaty concluded in 1787 by Cornwallis the military power of the Nawab was vested in the Company. In 1790, when the war against Tipu began, Cornwallis took possession of the Nawab's dominions to facilitate British military operations. At the end of the war the Nawab's authority was restored. But a treaty was made in 1792, empowering the Company to assume entire control of the Nawab's dominions during war, and to occupy specified districts if his payments to the Company should fall into arrears. Although the Nawab's dominions were 'mismanaged in the most ruinous manner', Sir John Shore felt that the Company had no treaty right to exercise a general power of intervention in his affairs.

The terms imposed on Shujaudaula of Oudh by the treaty of Allahabad (1765), made by Clive, included an engagement on the part of the Company to provide him with troops for the defence of his dominions if these were attacked, but the 'extraordinary expenses' of these troops were to be defrayed by him. This arrangement was 'the germ of all subsequent Subsidiary Alliance treaties'.

The treaty of Benares (1773), made by Warren Hastings, practically extinguished the independence of Oudh. The Nawab became dependent on British military support; he retained the responsibility for internal administration, but British influence curbed his freedom of action. By the treaty of 1775 Asafuddaula ceded Benares with its dependencies to the Company and agreed to pay an increased subsidy. Shore's interference in the disputed succession (1797), and the treaty (1798) which he im-

posed on Sa'adat Ali, further stressed the Nawab's subordinate position. In the course of three decades Oudh had sunk into the position of an ally totally incapable of resisting the will of the suzerain. The instrument used by the suzerain was the defensive alliance which made Oudh militarily impotent and economically bankrupt.

The Nizam's treaties of 1766 and 1768 had three common features. The troops of the Company were to be provided only upon the Nizam's requisition. They were to be withdrawn after they had completed the task for which they had been requisitioned. There was no fixed subsidy; the Nizam was to pay the actual expenses of the Company's troops. In 1789 Cornwallis extended the treaty of 1768 to mean that the force provided by the Company should not be 'employed against any power in alliance with the Company'. Shore's refusal to support the Nizam against the Marathas was not a violation of the treaty of 1768. Before 1798 the Nizam did not conclude any military alliance with the Company which reduced him to the position of a subordinate ally.

Wellesley

Before the days of Wellesley there was no attempt on the part of the Company to evolve a general policy towards the 'Country Powers'. *Ad hoc* treaties and agreements were concluded from time to time to deal with political and military exigencies as they arose. This was quite natural in view of the Company's political and military difficulties during the post-Plassey period. The revival of the Maratha power after Panipat, the rise of Haidar Ali, the reluctance of the French to reconcile themselves to the position assigned to them by the treaty of Paris, the shifting policies of the Nizam, and other factors ruled out the development of a broad-based and consistent policy. The 'Home' authorities were directed by Parliament, through Pitt's India Act, not to 'pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India'.

By the time of Wellesley's arrival the situation had changed radically in favour of the Company. The Marathas were distracted by internal dissensions. Tipu had been crippled by the war of 1790-92. The Nizam had suffered a serious blow at Kharda (1795). The Indian political system was on the verge of dissolution, and the Company had placed its power on firm foundations. But a new crisis had arisen: the French menace had assumed serious proportions in connection with the Revolu-

tionary War in Europe. Wellesley sought to create a new political system which would not only keep the French away, but also place at the disposal of the Company the co-operation and resources of the 'Country Powers'. His plan to establish 'a general bond of connection' with 'the principal States of India' was his contribution to empire-building in India. In the new political system initiated by him the States would exercise 'separate authority' within their respective territorial limits 'under the general protection of the British power'.

Military protection was the essence of the Subsidiary Alliance system. Four forms of this system have been distinguished. The 'most rudimentary form' was that by which the Company agreed to provide an Indian ruler with military forces only when requested to do so, as, for instance, in the treaty of 1768 with the Nizam. In the second form the subsidiary forces were permanently maintained at the expense of an Indian ruler for use at any time; these were cantoned close to the frontier, not in that ruler's own territory. The treaty of Burhanpur (1804) with Sindhia was an instance. In the third form the subsidiary forces were not only permanently maintained, but stationed within the frontier of the protected ruler, as in the treaty of 1798 with the Nizam. In the fourth form the subsidiary forces were permanent and stationed within the protected ruler's territory. Instead of the protected ruler having to pay a certain yearly sum from his general revenue for their maintenance, part of his territory was once and for all surrendered to the Company, as in the case of the treaty of 1800 with the Nizam, the treaty of 1801 with the Nawab of Oudh, and the treaty of Bassein (1802) with the Peshwa.

Of these four forms, the last three were developed during Wellesley's administration. A fifth form was introduced in Mysore, after the fall of Tipu, by the treaty of 1799 which provided for British interference in all concerns of the Mysore Government whenever necessary. The result was a 'cordial and intimate union' between the Company and Mysore.

Apart from military protection, subsidiary treaties had some other features which crystallized into a system. A British Resident or Political Officer was stationed at the court of every protected ruler or placed in charge of a group of protected States. No protected ruler could take a European in his service except with the consent of the British Government. Negotiations of any kind between two or more protected rulers were

not permissible without the knowledge and consent of the British Government. The only concession to the protected rulers (except in the case of the Raja of Mysore) was an engagement on the part of the Company not to interfere in the internal affairs of their States. For example, by the treaty of 1800 with the Nizam the Company engaged to 'have no manner of concern with any of His Highness's children, relations, subjects, or servants with respect to whom His Highness is absolute'.

Wellesley's imperial purpose was well-served by this system. Large contingents of the Company's army were maintained by the protected princes at their cost. 'The native princes themselves defrayed the expenses of the troops by whom they were to be overawed'. Moreover, during the Second Anglo-Maratha War the Company's territories were not exposed to attack from princes who were tied to it by Subsidiary Alliance. On the other hand, the Nizam co-operated with the Company in the war and received a part of Berar as his reward.

5. ERA OF NON-INTERVENTION

Cornwallis and Barlow (1805-7)

Cornwallis returned to India as Wellesley's successor (July 1805) with a mandate to reverse his policy as far as possible. The Napoleonic War in Europe created a political urge in England to avoid entanglements in India, but it was realized that the subsidiary treaties could not be repudiated. The new policy would be to renounce 'schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India' in conformity with the directive of Pitt's India Act. Cornwallis, who was in his sixty-seventh year, died (October 1805) before he could implement this policy.

The office of Governor-General was held temporarily for about two years (October 1805-July 1807) by Sir George Barlow, a senior official of narrow political views. He carried out the instructions of the 'Home' authorities and took steps which amounted practically to total repudiation of Wellesley's policy in respect of Sindhia and Holkar. By the treaty of Mustafapur (November 1805) the defensive alliance with Sindhia was renounced, important territorial concessions were made to him, and he was assured of British non-intervention in his relations with the Rajput princes. The treaty of Rajpurghat (December 1805) restored to Holkar the bulk of his territories and left to his vengeance the Raja of Bundi who had helped Monson.

Wellesley's treaty with Jaipur (1803) was repudiated. The Company's arrangements with Sindhia and Holkar 'abandoned the Rajput States to the cruelty of the Maratha hordes and their Pindari allies'. The connection between the Cis-Sutlej Sikh States and the Company, formed during the Second Anglo-Maratha War, came virtually to an end. In the case of the Peshwa, Barlow maintained the *status quo*; he resisted an attempt by the Court of Directors to annul the treaty of Bassein.

In Metcalfe's view, the Cornwallis-Barlow policy 'involved disgrace without recompense, treaties without security ... peace without tranquillity'. But this policy was not without value. It 'reduced the Company's commitments at a time when they could not be extended or even maintained at their existing limits' because England was seriously threatened in Europe by Napoleon. Nelson's victory at Trafalgar (October 1805) removed the fear of invasion; but Napoleon marched from victory to victory on the continent (Austerlitz, Jena, Friedland) and formed an alliance with Russia by the treaty of Tilsit (1807). Meanwhile England was weakened by the death of Younger Pitt. The Continental System, intended to crush the trade of England, was launched by Napoleon in 1806. England adopted the policy of blockading foreign ports, and captured the Danish fleet at Copenhagen, to prevent Napoleon seizing it, in 1807. The Peninsular War commenced in 1808. During this period of crisis it was natural for England to put the Indian problem on ice and withdraw from the policy of involvement.

Lord Minto (1807-13)

The next Governor-General, Lord Minto, had long acquaintance with Indian affairs. He had been one of the managers of Warren Hastings's impeachment, and he had served as President of the Board of Control. He was committed to the policy of Non-intervention, and the European situation left no scope for any real deviation from it. But it was becoming increasingly difficult to ignore political developments in India and obligations arising out of the Company's relations with the 'Country Powers'. As Malcolm, one of the shrewdest of contemporary political actors, remarked: 'The government of Lord Minto had no result more important, than the impression it conveyed to the authorities at home, of the utter impracticability of persevering in that neutral policy which they had desired to pursue'.

Minto's adherence to the policy of Non-intervention is illustrated in his treatment of the Rajput States. Harassed by

the Marathas and the Pathans, torn by mutual rivalries and dissensions, the Rajput princes sought alliances with the Company; but Minto was steadfast in his refusal.

The only Indian ruler with whom he entered into a treaty of 'equal alliance' (treaty of Amritsar, 1809) was Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Lahore. This was preceded by a proclamation taking the Cis-Sutlej Sikh States of the Punjab under the Company's protection. These measures were intended to counteract Napoleon's project of a Franco-Russian expedition to India through Persia and Afghanistan. That project, following the treaty of Tilsit, haunted the imagination of British statesmen and officers in those days. This was an alarmist view, for there were serious obstacles in Napoleon's way: the traditional hostility between Russia and Persia, the fluctuating relations between France and Russia, the anarchy in Afghanistan, and the difficulties of transport and communication through lands covered by deserts and mountains. These were overlooked by the alarmed English rulers in their anxiety for the security of their Indian Empire. 'No one, in those days when ancient Kingdoms in Europe were falling like ninepins, could set a limit to the power and ambition of Napoleon'.

Connected with the measures taken in the Punjab were the treaty of 1809 with the Amirs of Sind which provided for the exclusion of the French from their country, as also embassies to Persia and Kabul. Malcolm, whom Wellesley had sent to Persia in 1799, was again sent to that country by Minto in 1808. At the same time another envoy, Sir Harford Jones, was sent to Teheran by the British Government in London. The latter concluded a treaty with Persia (1809) by which the Shah engaged not to allow any European force to pass through his country towards either India or its ports. Another treaty, concluded in 1814, bound the Persians to attack the Afghans if they invaded India. During his stay in Persia Malcolm collected materials for his famous work *History of Persia*. Mountstuart Elphinstone was sent by Minto to Afghanistan in 1808, but he never got further than Peshawar. He concluded a treaty (1809) against a Franco-Russian expedition, but it proved abortive because the Amir, Shah Shuja, was shortly afterwards overthrown by his domestic enemies.

By 1809 Napoleon, deeply involved in the Peninsular War, had 'abandoned his schemes for emulating the exploits of Alexander the Great'. His invasion of Russia (1812) rendered

impossible the revival of the project of a Franco-Russian expedition to India. These developments facilitated the complete expulsion of the French from the East. When the French seized Portugal (1807) the British occupied Goa. In 1810 both Mauritius and Bourbon were occupied. In the same year Amboyna and the Moluccas—Dutch possessions under French influence—were seized. In 1811 an expedition, accompanied by Minto himself, conquered French-controlled Java. After the fall of Napoleon the Dutch possessions were restored to the Dutch and Bourbon to the French; Mauritius remained a British possession. But the expedition of 1811 was not fruitless. It marked the beginning of 'the great adventure of Singapore'; 'the seed of the British Empire in south-east Asia' was sown by Minto.

6. THIRD ANGLO-MARATHA WAR (1817-18)

Lord Hastings (1813-23)

Lord Minto was succeeded in October 1813 by Lord Moira who was created Marquess of Hastings in 1817 as a reward for his success in the war with Nepal. He held his high office for more than nine years—till January 1823. After a not very distinguished military career he became an intimate friend of the Prince Regent who became King George IV in 1820, and to him he owed his appointment in India. He did not come with any political reputation behind him. In the notorious case of William Palmer & Co. he was suspected by many contemporaries to be guilty of nepotism. Yet he is undoubtedly one of the greatest proconsuls sent by England to govern India. As a military strategist, as a statesman capable of dealing with large and complicated political problems, and as an administrator he left an enduring impression on Indian history. Although he was in his fifty-ninth year when he assumed office he showed surprising energy and industry in the discharge of his duties.

In England Lord Hastings had spoken bitterly against Wellesley's policy of expansion, and he came to India to continue the peaceful work of Cornwallis, Barlow and Minto. But after his arrival in India circumstances compelled him to change his views, and he left the British Empire in India much larger than he had found it on his arrival. He had two important advantages. Like Cornwallis, he held the two offices of Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief. A more important factor was the disappearance of the French menace. The battle of

Leipzig (1813)—the 'Battle of the Nations'—foreshadowed Napoleon's final collapse in the battle of Waterloo (1815). At the Congress of Vienna (1815) the French and the Dutch recognized for the first time British sovereignty over the Company's possessions; the French agreed to maintain no troops and erect no fortresses. Lord Hastings was not thwarted in his confrontation with the Marathas by the ominous prospect of French intervention.

Idea of paramountcy

As early as 1814 Lord Hastings wrote to the 'Home' authorities that the British Government should become the 'acknowledged head of a confederacy' which should use its 'whole strength' against 'any invader of the public repose'. In 1815 he wrote that the Company must retain that 'preponderance of power' by which 'mines of wealth had been acquired for its treasury'. In 1816 he wrote: 'Our object ought to be to render the British Government paramount in effect, if not declaredly so. We should hold the other States as vassals, in substance, though not in name'. These 'vassals' should support the Company with their forces 'in any call', and 'they should submit their mutual differences to the head of the confederacy without attacking each other's territories'. Subject to the pledge of these 'two great feudal dues', they should remain 'possessed of perfect internal sovereignty'.

This plan was no less inconsistent than Wellesley's plan with the directive in Pitt's India Act (1784) against 'schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India'. Lord Hastings 'felt that the proper position of the States in the interior of India was one of isolation (from each other) and subordinate co-operation (with the Company)'. He had a fully developed plan for construction of a new political system under the paramountcy of the Company before the process of exterminating the Pindaris began in 1817. At the end he emerged as a greater annexationist than Wellesley. The annexation of the Peshwa's territories was certainly a far greater blow at the indigenous States system than the annexation of parts of Mysore and Oudh.

Holkar, Sindhia and Bhonsle

Taking advantage of the unexpectedly generous terms obtained from Barlow, Yashwant Rao Holkar contemplated reunification of the members of the Maratha confederacy and carried on talks with Daulat Rao Sindhia who was, however, extremely lukewarm in the matter. A complete reorganization of Holkar's

army was taken up, and a gun factory was founded. But Yashwant Rao sank into insanity in 1807 and died in that condition in 1811. During this period there was complete anarchy in the Holkar State. After his death his wife Tulsi Bai assumed power in the name of his minor son Malhar Rao, but control passed into the hands of the powerful Pathan adventurer Amir Khan. Unable for want of funds to meet the demands of the army, harassed by Sindhia's aggression on Holkar's territories in Malwa, she was inclined towards accepting the terms of an alliance offered by the English in 1817. She was murdered by the mutinous troops (1817).

Daulat Rao Sindhia and Raghujii Bhonsle II attacked Bhopal in 1807, and again in 1814. As a result Bhopal was driven into an alliance with the Company (1814). Sindhia's power was crippled by internal dissensions and military disorganization. Lord Hastings compelled him to sign the treaty of Gwalior (November 1817) which bound him to co-operate with the Company against the Pindaris and cancelled the clause in the treaty of Surji Anjangaon restricting the British from negotiation with Rajput princes and other chiefs.

Raghujii Bhonsle II died in 1816. He was succeeded by his imbecile son Parsoji. Parsoji's cousin, Appa Saheb, secured the regency. The State suffered from factious intrigue. Lord Hastings used this opportunity to compel Appa Saheb to conclude a subsidiary treaty at Nagpur (1816). A subsidiary force was introduced into Nagpur and the State lost its independence. Malcolm says that 'in the actual condition of India, no event could be more fortunate than the subsidiary alliance with Nagpur'. But Appa Saheb defied the treaty after his accession to the throne on the death of Parsoji (February 1817).

Peshwa Baji Rao II

Baji Rao was slow in realizing that after the treaty of Bassein he had lost the right of dealing directly with other powers, including the Maratha chiefs such as Sindhia, Holkar, Bhonsle and Gaikwar. The numerous treaties concluded by the Company with different rulers on different occasions deprived him—directly or indirectly—of the power and prestige which he had enjoyed as the head of the Maratha confederacy. He accepted this humiliating position after wrangling in vain with the British Government for several years. He also found that he was no longer free to exercise uncontrolled authority over the subordinate *jagirdars* who had been granted large landed

estates in former times for maintaining troops for the service of the State. As he no longer required the services of their troops he tried to reduce their possessions, thereby increasing his own income. The British Resident, Elphinstone, forced upon him a settlement in favour of the *jagirdars* (1812) after declining to employ the subsidiary troops to enforce his demands upon them. The Raja of Kolhapur, who declined to accept the Peshwa's overlordship, concluded a treaty with the Company (1812) and surrendered Malwan to the English.

The Peshwa-Gaikwar dispute had more serious consequences. The Gaikwars had to pay an annual tribute of 24 *lakhs*, as also heavy succession fees, to the Peshwa. Large arrears had accumulated since 1753, and the total dues amounted to about three *crores*. Moreover, there were serious discrepancies in the accounts prepared by the two parties. Another point of dispute was the lease of half share of Gujarat, which belonged to the Peshwa, to a son of Govind Rao Gaikwar. The lease was to expire in 1814.

Gangadhar Shastri, Fateh Singh Gaikwar's minister, came to Poona in 1814 to negotiate a settlement with the Peshwa. While the negotiations were going on Baji Rao disputed Gaikwar's right to make a separate treaty with the Company because he was subject to the Peshwa's suzerainty. Before final decisions were reached on the questions of arrears and suzerainty Gangadhar Shastri was murdered at Pandharpur where he had gone with Baji Rao for pilgrimage (July 1815). Suspicion fell on the Peshwa's confidant Trimbak Rao Dangle. Baji Rao refused to surrender him on Elphinstone's demand; but he had to yield when the Resident massed the Company's troops. Trimbak was confined in the fort of Thana, but he escaped (September 1816) nearly a year after he had fallen into British hands. The Peshwa made no serious attempt to arrest him. Whether he was privy to Shastri's murder is not clearly known; but after the crime he systematically sheltered and aided Trimbak.

Matters took a serious turn, and open hostilities between the Peshwa and the Company were forestalled only by his reluctant acceptance of a new treaty at Poona (June 1817). Trimbak was declared to be Shastri's murderer. The Peshwa's overlordship over the subordinate chiefs was terminated. His territories outside Maharashtra were surrendered to the Company. His agents were withdrawn from other courts, and his right to correspond or communicate with them was explicitly taken away.

'Thus the Maratha confederacy was finally and publicly dissolved'. Although Baji Rao had foolishly challenged the British Government, the terms imposed on him were too harsh to form the basis of an enduring settlement.

The Pindaris

The first military venture of Lord Hastings, the Nepal War (1814-16), was brought to a satisfactory conclusion by the treaty of Sagauli (March 1816). He was now free to turn his attention to the Pindaris. Their depredations overflowed from Central India and Rajasthan to British territory. In 1812 they raided the Mirzapur district. In 1814-15 they traversed the Nizam's dominions and plundered portions of the Madras Presidency. Their lawless raids synchronized in Central India and Rajasthan with the depredations of the troops of Sindhia and Holkar and the plunder-hungry followers of the Pathan adventurer Amir Khan. A contemporary English writer says: 'Never had there been such intense and general suffering in India; the native States were disorganized, and society on the verge of dissolution; the people crushed by despots and ruined by exactions; the country overrun by bandits and its resources wasted by enemies; armed forces existed only to plunder, torture and mutiny; government had ceased to exist, there remained only oppression and misery'.

The Pindaris had been associated with the Maratha armies since the days of Shivaji. They were 'unpaid auxiliaries attached to each chief's fighting quota, whose duty it was to step in the moment the battle ended and finish the enemy by seizing his property and camp equipage and destroying his power of recovery'. They came into prominence during the Maratha War of Independence in the last years of Aurangzib's reign. In the eighteenth century they were attached to the armies of Baji Rao I and the Maratha chiefs, such as Sindhia, Holkar, Pawar and others. They were skilful marauders with horses of their own, but they moved under restraints imposed by the organized command and followed the customary rules.

A change came in the early years of the nineteenth century. The number of the Pindaris increased, their composition took on a new complexion, and they adopted more ruthless methods. Princes who accepted Subsidiary Alliance and became entitled to the protection of subsidiary forces dispensed with the services of many of their own troops. These soldiers, suddenly thrown out of employment, swelled the ranks of the Pindaris.

These heterogeneous freebooters were used by many chiefs, particularly Sindhia and Holkar, in their 'predatory warfare'. There were two distinct groups known as 'Sindhiasahi' and 'Holkarsahi'. They had recognized leaders who acquired large estates, commanded thousands of armed men and became 'an independent force in politics'. Karim Khan, Namdar Khan and Cheetu were attached to Yashwant Rao Holkar; but Daulat Rao Sindhia won over Cheetu to his side and used him against Karim Khan.

The only object of the Pindaris was plunder; burning, killing and torture were their usual methods. The weakness of the principalities of Central India left their subjects in a helpless condition. The Pindaris arose, as Malcolm says, 'like masses of putrefaction in animal matter, out of the corruption of weak and expiring States'. They had no bonds of caste, creed or political allegiance. They moved swiftly, for they were neither encumbered by tents nor baggage. They 'made a sweep of all the cattle and property they could find, committing at the same time the most horrid crimes, and destroying what they could not carry away'. They were 'intangible'. Their wealth, their booty and their families were hidden in mountains and in forts belonging to the allied chiefs. No attack on a party of the Pindaris or on any of their strongholds could produce lasting results, for the vacuum created by the ruin of an individual freebooter was filled up immediately by another.

The Pindaris were connected with, and matched by Pathan freebooters whose most important leader was Amir Khan. The Pathans were different from the Pindaris in so far as they had regular infantry, organized cavalry and artillery. For some years Amir Khan was the virtual ruler of the Holkar State and the scourge of Rajasthan.

Pindari War (1817-18)

Before launching a war of extermination against the Pindaris Lord Hastings took political measures to isolate them. The treaty of Gwalior with Sindhia (1817) was followed by treaties with the Rajput States. Bhopal accepted a subsidiary treaty (1818). Amir Khan was conciliated by confirmation in his existing territories as Nawab of Tonk. The Peshwa was bound by the treaty of Poona (1817) and Appa Saheb Bhonsle by the treaty of Nagpur (1816). Only the Holkar State, controlled by the mutinous soldiery, remained outside the British net.

Towards the end of 1817 the Pindaris were surrounded by a large British army of 113,000 men and 300 guns. By the beginning of 1818 their organized bands had been destroyed. Karim Khan and Namdar Khan submitted; the former was given a small estate near Gorakhpur. Cheetu fled into jungles and was devoured by a tiger.

Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817-18)

'The hunt of the Pindaris became merged in the Third Anglo-Maratha War'. The Pindari chiefs tried to secure the support of the Maratha rulers, but received little response. However, it is probable that during the Pindari War the Peshwa and Appa Saheb hoped that they would be able to overwhelm the small British forces stationed at their capitals. Provoked by Elphinstone towards whom he behaved with studied disrespect, Baji Rao sacked and burnt the British Residency at Poona (November 1817). His forces suffered defeats at Kirkee near Poona and at Yervada (November 1817). He became a fugitive till his surrender to Malcolm at Mhow near Indore (June 1818). Meanwhile Bapu Gokhale continued the struggle in the Peshwa's name. He suffered defeat at Koregaon on the Bhima (January 1818). He was defeated and killed at Ashta (February 1818). The fortress of Asirgarh was not captured by the English till 1819.

Appa Saheb of Nagpur followed the Peshwa's example; but he surrendered after defeats at Sitabaldi near Nagpur (November 1817) and at Nagpur (December 1817). The contagion had meanwhile spread to Indore. The forces of Malhar Rao Holkar suffered a decisive defeat at Mahidpur (December 1817). Sindhia did not fulfil his promise of active help in the Pindari War, but he did not take up arms against the Company in 1817-18.

Political settlement of 1818

With regard to the Peshwa, Lord Hastings decided 'in favour of ... the perpetual exclusion of his family from any share of influence or dominion, and the annihilation of the Peshwa's name and authority for ever'. No symbol of Maratha unity was to be left; no further opportunity was to be given to the Marathas to rally round their traditional chief. Baji Rao was granted a generous annual pension of eight *lakhs* and sent to Bithur (near Kanpur). There he lived in confinement till his death in 1851. A small principality carved out of his dominions was given to Pratap Singh, a descendant of Shivaji, who established his capital at Satara. A contemporary writer observes that 'the

re-establishment of the Satara Raja, in the very seat of the ancient power and splendour of his race, was well adapted to reconcile the older Maratha families to the annihilation of the more recent title and authority of the Peshwa'. The remaining parts of the Peshwa's territory were brought under British rule and incorporated in the Bombay Presidency. The civil administration of the conquered tracts was organized by Elphinstone. His able assistant, Grant Duff, published his *History of the Mahrattas* in 1826.

Appa Saheb fled to the Punjab and eventually died in Rajasthan. He was formally deposed. Raghuji Bhonsle III, a minor grandson of Raghuji Bhonsle II, was recognized as the ruler of the Bhonsle territories; but a portion, known as the Sagar and Narmada Territories, was annexed by the Company, and Berar was given to the Nizam in reward for his assistance in the war. By the treaty of Mandasor (January 1818) Malhar Rao Holkar gave up his territories south of the Narmada, abandoned his claims upon the Rajput States as also Amir Khan, accepted a British Resident at his court, and, after reducing the State army, engaged to maintain a contingent to co-operate with the Company. Sindhia, who had connived at the retention of the great fortress of Asirgarh by one of his officers, had to conclude a treaty ceding Ajmer and adjacent lands to the Company.

The Maratha homeland, with the exception of the small principality of Satara, came under British rule. Large Marathi-speaking tracts, including Berar, remained under the rule of the Nizam. The territories of Sindhia and Holkar lay in Central India, those of Gaikwar in Gujarat. Satara was annexed to British territories by Lord Dalhousie in 1848.

The Pindari War extended and consolidated the British power in Central India. The smaller States of Malwa, including Dhar and Dewas, acknowledged British supremacy. Malcolm concluded agreements with a large number of Central Indian chieftains. All the smaller principalities of Bundelkhand came under British protection. The 'universal establishment of the British influence', observed a contemporary British writer, ended 'the dark age of trouble and violence' in Central India.

Causes of fall of Maratha power

It is not correct to say that 'an edifice reared by the genius of Shivaji and laboriously fostered by the first four Peshwas ... easily crumbled' in the time of Baji Rao II. The decline of the Maratha power was a slow process. If it did not begin in 1761,

it certainly began in 1773 when Raghunath Rao's guilty ambition provoked a civil war and invited British intervention. Grant Duff says that 'the plains of Panipat were not more fatal to the Maratha Empire than the early end of Peshwa Madhav Rao I'. During the next half century a new participant in Indian politics—the English—steadily advanced towards supremacy, but the Maratha society produced only two capable leaders, Mahadji Sindhia and Nana Fadnavis. After the former's death (1794) and the latter's fall from power (1798) the larger political interests of the Marathas were ruined by the follies of Baji Rao II, Daulat Rao Sindhia, Raghujji Bhonsle II and Yashwant Rao Holkar. The 'two raw wicked youths', the Peshwa and Sindhia, who controlled the government of Poona at the close of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, were incapable of fighting against 'the brilliancy of British talent in the spheres of diplomacy and war alike'.

But the fatal dissensions which shook the foundations of the Maratha power in those crucial years were not a new development. The feud between Santaji Ghorpare and Dhanaji Jadhav, the protracted intrigues of Tara Bai, Baji Rao I's struggle against the *Senapati*, the repeated rebellions of Raghunath Rao and Janoji Bhonsle, the rivalry between Mahadji Sindhia and Tukoji Holkar, the persistent efforts of Nana Fadnavis to weaken Mahadji Sindhia—all these foreshadowed the events following the accession of Baji Rao II. 'While engaged in war against a powerful external enemy like Aurangzib, the Marathas, for the time being, could forget their private differences; but hardly was the crisis over when they prosecuted their quarrels recklessly, oblivious of everything else'. The last demonstration of this capacity to unite against a common enemy was the battle of Kharda. The 'two raw wicked youths' failed to grasp the significance of Wellesley's imperial policy and, completely ignoring the impending danger, launched a disastrous internecine strife.

Disunity and strife were inherent in the feudalization of the Maratha State which began during the War of Independence. The *saranjami* system converted it from 'an organic whole (in the days of Shivaji) to an inorganic mass'. After the death of Madhav Rao I the Maratha Empire was really 'a loose confederacy of ambitious feudal chiefs'. The British empire-builders realized the importance of centralizing the management of their foreign and military policies at the very beginning of their imperial adventure. The Regulating Act (1773) created a Supreme

Government in Calcutta, and Pitt's India Act (1784) enlarged its powers. Lord Cornwallis and Lord Hastings held the offices of Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief and exercised the highest authority in political and military matters. During the same period the forces of disintegration made rapid progress in the Maratha Empire.

Neglect of administration was one of the basic defects of the Maratha Empire, at least at its later stage. Whatever care the Peshwas bestowed on administrative improvement was confined to the *Swarajya*, and even there concessions had to be made to the deep-rooted vested interests. The successors of Madhav Rao I were too busy in war and intrigue to look after the welfare of the people. Nana Fadnavis accumulated private fortune amounting to several *crores* at the expense of the State. At the time of Baji Rao II's accession 'the derelict Poona Government was utterly insolvent'. Grant Duff says: 'Nothing could exceed the state of anarchy which prevailed throughout the country; at the court bribery, execution and murders; in the provinces, violence, rapine and bloodshed'. The armies of Sindhia and Holkar were the whole machinery of their government and were at all times kept in motion for the purpose of realizing contributions from reluctant subordinate chiefs. Yashwant Rao Holkar had no settled government: 'his empire was the empire of the saddle'. Conditions in the territories of Bhonsle and Gai-kwar were almost similar. A British Resident at Poona wrote that the Maratha State was 'ill qualified for permanent conquest or civil government, however formidable might be the means which it possessed of ravage and destruction'.

Elphinstone described the Maratha army as a 'loose and straggling mass of camels, elephants, bullocks, *nautach*-girls, *fakirs* and buffoons, lancemen and matchlockmen, banians and *mutasuddis*'. Daulat Rao Sindhia took eighteen days to cover 140 miles between the Tapti and the Narmada; dance, music, kite-flying and tiger-shooting kept him busy. In Baji Rao II's army the rank of officer was given to a Muslim butcher.

Although Yashwant Rao Holkar had 60,000 horsemen, the other Maratha chiefs neglected the cavalry and attached too much importance to artillery. But the Marathas did not possess the requisite knowledge of scientific processes in the manufacture and use of superior arms. Their artillerymen were far behind the Company's sepoys in the accuracy and rapidity of fire. The officers of artillery were foreign mercenaries; 'the ignorant

fighting castes of India could produce no leader capable of learning the European system of war'. As the European commanders in Maratha service left their masters during the Second Anglo-Maratha War. 'their trained battalions, for want of leaders, went down fighting against better-led and better-disciplined' troops of the Company.

The Maratha army of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was a heterogeneous force. The infantry were almost exclusively men of Oudh, Rohilkhand and the Doab. The artillerymen were Upper Indian Muslims and Buxari Hindus, with a large proportion of Telugus and Goanese Christians. There were about 5,000 Arabs in the forces of Nana Fadnavis. These mercenaries were paid higher salaries than the local *fauj*. This caused jealousy between the two wings of the army.

The fundamental defect of the Maratha military organization in the Second and Third Anglo-Maratha Wars was lack of leadership. Elphinstone wrote: 'The Marathas had at their command ample means of waging a successful war—armies, arms, ammunitions. Everything was ready. They only lacked a leader'. He added: 'It was the good fortune of the British that neither Baji Rao II nor Daulat Rao Sindhia possessed the strength and spirit to stand forth boldly at a critical moment. If there was any other more intrepid man occupying the Peshwa's position at that time, it was not difficult to conceive how the British would have fared'. Only Yashwant Rao Holkar provided bold—but rash—leadership. On the British side the campaigns of Arthur Wellesley and Lord Lake in the Second, and of Lord Hastings and General Smith in the Third Anglo-Maratha War are 'notable instances of inspired leadership, resolution and movement'.

The Maratha State, with an overwhelming majority of Hindu population, was liberal in its treatment of the Muslims except in the case of cow slaughter. But the Hindu society itself lacked cohesion. The Peshwa claimed to be the head of a 'Government belonging to Brahmins and cows'. The Brahmins had been enjoying preferential treatment since the days of Shivaji. Caste jealousy was a factor of fluctuating importance in administrative and political matters. Ranade noted the evil effect of 'the infusion of the racial and caste elements among the military leaders' in the second half of the eighteenth century. At the lower level the non-Brahmin cultivators' marginal

existence was threatened by the farming and *saranjami* systems of which the Brahmins were generally the beneficiaries.

Religion had degenerated into ritual and lost its moral influence on the upper classes of Maratha society. Baji Rao II, notorious for sexual indulgence and frivolous amusement, 'made an outward show of constant religious devotion'. Daulat Rao Sindhia and Yashwant Rao Holkar were no less guilty of moral depravity. An example had been set by Baji Rao I whose Muslim mistress Mastani is a well-known figure in Maratha history. There is a long list of Mahadji Sindhia's wives. Nana Fadnavis married at least nine wives; the youngest was nine years old when he died at the age of fifty-eight. In 1818 the Maratha society was entirely out of tune with the forces of rationalism and renaissance which had begun to influence the Bengali society under the impact of British rule.

7. THE RAJPUT STATES

Wellesley's treaties

During the long reign of Sawai Pratap Singh (1778-1803) internal as well as external factors brought the State of Jaipur to the brink of dissolution. The administration was inefficient and corrupt. An ambitious vassal, Pratap Singh Naruka of Macheri (Alwar), pursued an aggressive and disloyal policy. Mahadji Sindhia invaded Jaipur territory several times, fought at Lalsot (1787) against the combined forces of Jaipur and Marwar, and crushed them at Patan (1790). This was followed by Tukoji Holkar's invasion of Jaipur (1791) and—subsequently—his defeat by Mahadji Sindhia's forces at Lakheri (1793).

During the period 1792-1801 no Sindhia was present in Hindustan in person; but the political agents of Mahadji and Daulat Rao Sindhia, as also their trained battalions commanded by De Boigne and Perron, realised tribute from the Rajput States. In 1799 the Marathas, assisted by George Thomas, defeated the Jaipur troops at Fatehpur. In 1800 Lakhwa Dada, Daulat Rao Sindhia's viceroy in Hindustan, defeated the Jaipur army, assisted by a large Rathor army from Marwar, at Malpura.

Sawai Pratap Singh never recovered from this blow to his power and prestige. His successor, Sawai Jagat Singh (1803-18), has been described by Tod (who knew him personally) as 'the most dissolute prince of his race or of his age'. During his reign

the Second Anglo-Maratha War broke out. Wellesley decided to 'unite all the regular Governments against the predatory powers'. His purpose was to use the Rajput States as 'a barrier against the return of the Marathas to the northern parts of Hindustan'. A subsidiary treaty was concluded (1803) after Sawai Jagat Singh's accession. Jaipur was entangled in the Anglo-Maratha struggle. Difficulties arose in connection with Yashwant Rao Holkar's campaigns; threatened by the ruthless Maratha chief, Sawai Jagat Singh failed to extend such co-operation as the British authorities expected from him.

Marwar was devastated by civil war and struggle against the Marathas during the long reign of Bijay Singh (1752-93). Civil war broke out anew in the reign of his successor, Bhim Singh (1793-1803). He was an ally of Jaipur at Lalsot and Patan, and he was severely defeated by Sindhia at Merta (1790). The next ruler, Man Singh (1803-43), was harassed by serious internal troubles throughout his long reign. He concluded a subsidiary treaty with the Company (1803), but Wellesley cancelled it as he continued to bargain about terms.

After Wellesley's recall his successor, Cornwallis, decided to withdraw the Company's protection from the trans-Chambal States. All ties were to be cut off in the case of those Rajput States which had obligations to Sindhia and Holkar. In pursuance of this policy Barlow, who succeeded Cornwallis, dissolved the alliance with Jaipur (1806) on the plea that the State had failed to fulfil its obligations to the Company under the treaty of 1803.

Minto and the Rajput States

During the Governor-Generalship of Lord Minto (1807-13) the policy of Non-intervention followed by Cornwallis and Barlow remained in force. The Napoleonic War in Europe as also the difficulties of the Company in India ruled out a 'forward' move.

Jaipur suffered from the depredations of Sindhia and Amir Khan and the ravages of the Pindaris. Moreover, Sawai Jagat Singh entangled his State in a war against Man Singh of Jodhpur. The vassal Raja of Macheri occupied some Jaipur forts and villages. The turbulent tribes of the Shekhawati region plundered the frontier of Hariyana.

Marwar was devastated by a civil war in which Man Singh's claim to the throne was contested by Dhonkal Singh with the support of a powerful feudal chief, Sawai Singh of Pokaran.

Jaipur intervened as an ally of Dhonkal Singh. Taking advantage of this internal strife, as also of the growing weakness of Sindhia and the dissolution of Holkar's Government following Yashwant Rao Holkar's insanity, Amir Khan established his ascendancy in Marwar.

Mewar was under the government of Sindhia's deputies, Ambaji Ingle and Lakhwa Dada, during the years 1791-99. Rana Bhim Singh (1773-1828) was, as Tod says, 'naturally defective in energy, and swayed by faction and intrigue'. During the Second Anglo-Maratha War both Sindhia and Holkar tried to secure control over the strongholds in Mewar. After the war the helplessness of Mewar was demonstrated by the tragic fate of Bhim Singh's daughter, Krishnakumari. Man Singh of Marwar and Sawai Jagat Singh of Jaipur were rival suitors for her hand. Personal vanity as also political interest drove them into armed conflict over this issue. Sindhia and Amir Khan intervened. At last the problem was solved by administering poison to the princess (1810). This sacrifice did not free Mewar from her oppressors—the Marathas, Amir Khan and the Pindaris. Tod says: 'Mewar was rapidly approaching dissolution; fields laid waste, cities in ruins, inhabitants exiled, chieftains demoralized, the prince and his family destitute of common comforts'.

The Rajput princes realized that nothing but the protection of the Company could guarantee the security of their States. Jaipur, Marwar and Mewar asked for such protection on several occasions, but Minto persisted in the policy of not establishing political relations with these 'weak and defenceless States'.

Policy of Lord Hastings

Within four months of his assumption of Governor-Generalship (October 1813) Lord Hastings proposed complete rejection of the policy of Non-intervention and the establishment of a 'confederacy' of the Indian States under the paramountcy of the Company. The ground was prepared by the successful termination of the Nepal War in 1816 and the urgency of crushing the Pindaris. The co-operation of the Rajput States—particularly Jaipur—was likely to be a 'first-rate' advantage for the Company in the proposed war against the Pindaris.

Treaties (1817-23)

The case of Jaipur was taken up first, and the task of concluding an alliance was entrusted to Metcalfe who had arranged the treaty of Amritsar with Ranjit Singh, the Sikh Maharaja,

in 1809. After protracted negotiations for two years a treaty was made in April 1818. It provided for 'perpetual friendship, alliance and unity of interest' between Jaipur and the Company. The Raja engaged to act in 'subordinate co-operation with the British Government', to acknowledge its supremacy, to maintain no connection with other chiefs and States, and not to enter into any negotiation with any chief or State without the knowledge and sanction of the British Government. All disputes between Jaipur and other States would be submitted to the arbitration and award of the British Government. Specific provisions were made for payment of tribute, as also for supply of troops by Jaipur at the requisition of the British Government. The Raja and his heirs and successors would remain 'absolute rulers of their territory ... and British civil and criminal jurisdiction would not be introduced into that principality'.

Treaties on similar terms were concluded with Karauli (1817), Kota (1817), Mewar (1818), Marwar (1818), Bundi (1818), Bikaner (1818), Jaisalmer (1818), and Sirohi (1823). In the case of Jaisalmer no tribute was demanded, nor was any liability imposed for furnishing troops at the requisition of the British Government. To the treaty with Kota a supplementary article was added later (1818). It provided that the Maharao would continue to enjoy the dignity of ruling prince, but 'the entire administration of the affairs of the principality' should be vested in the minister, Zalim Singh, and his heirs and successors. This arrangement led to many complications. In 1831 the supplementary article was repealed, and a part of Kota was converted into a separate State named Jhalawar under the rule of a descendant of Zalim Singh. Macheri, originally a chieftainship in the State of Jaipur, had already developed into a separate State called Alwar. It entered into subordinate alliance with the British Government in 1803, and concluded a fresh agreement in 1811.

The settlement of 1817-18, preceded by Ranjit Singh's recognition of British suzerainty over the Cis-Sutlej States by the treaty of Amritsar (1809), 'completed the establishment of the hegemony of the Company' throughout India except the dominions of Ranjit Singh and Sind in the north-west and Assam in the north-east. The fall of the Marathas removed the Company's only rival. Ranjit Singh accepted the limits imposed on him by the treaty of 1809. The absorption of Assam and Sind in the British Empire was not long delayed.

THE NORTH-WEST

I. RISE OF SIKH MONARCHY

Early years of Ranjit Singh

During the closing years of the eighteenth century the greater part of the Punjab was divided among twelve principal *Misls* which formed a 'loose confederacy'. Maha Singh, chief of the Sukerchakia *Misl*, died in 1790. He was succeeded by his son Ranjit Singh, born in 1780. In his early years he grew up illiterate and spent his time in dissipation and indulgence. The affairs of the *Misl* were looked after by his mother Raj Kaur with the assistance of *Dewan* Lakhpat Rai. He asserted himself in his seventeenth year, having cleared his way—it is said—by murdering his mother and the *Dewan*. The evidence in support of this charge of cruelty is negligible.

The Sukerchakia *Misl* ruled over extensive territories from its headquarters at Gujranwala in west Punjab. Zaman Shah, grandson of Ahmad Shah Abdali and ruler of Kabul since 1793, occupied Lahore in 1797. He tried to conciliate Ranjit Singh, for he expected to use the young Sikh chief's support in re-establishing the Afghan mastery in the Punjab.

Ranjit's first important achievement was the occupation of Lahore from the Bhangi *Misl* in 1799. It is said that he secured the chief city of the Punjab on the basis of a grant from Zaman Shah, but the evidence on this point is doubtful. A period of 'petty warfare' followed; Ranjit extended his territories, imposed tribute on the rulers of Jammu and Kasur, and increased his political influence. In 1805 he occupied the sacred city of Amritsar, a stronghold of the Bhangi *Misl*.

Royal Title

Soon after the occupation of Lahore Ranjit assumed the title of 'Maharaja' (12 April 1801) and issued silver and copper coins which were called 'Nanak Shahi'. On one side was inscribed the picture of Guru Nanak and on the other side were inscribed the words *Guru Nanak ji sahai* in Persian and *Gurumukhi*. The implication was that the ruler was the Guru and the Maharaja was simply his humble servant. Ranjit was anointed on behalf of *Panth Khalsaji* by Sahib Singh Bedi, who enjoyed great respect in the Sikh community by virtue of his descent from Guru Nanak, after the performance of certain religious rites.

Ranjit's purpose was probably to declare his own superiority to his 'associates'—the other *Misl* chiefs—none of whom used a similar title. The confederacy of the *Misls* was still alive; the *Sarbat Khalsa* met for the last time in 1805. As a safeguard against the resentment of other *Misl* chiefs he declared that he was but the *nagara* (war-drum) of Guru Gobind Singh. Throughout his reign he acted as if he was a mere instrument of the *Khalsa* for the assertion and execution of its sovereignty. He spoke of his Government as 'Khalsaji' or 'Sarkar Khalsa'. The impersonal designation of 'Sarkar' was used to denote the source of his orders. His name was never inscribed on his coins. 'The theocratic zeal and democratic spirit were far too deep-rooted to allow any individual to do such a highly objectionable thing', i.e., to claim personal sovereignty by issuing coins in his own name.

Cis-Sutlej States

The discontinuation of the *Sarbat Khalsa* after 1805 was a bold innovation in view of the fact that Ranjit was not yet the master of the whole of the trans-Sutlej region. Perhaps he was emboldened by the conquest of Amritsar which was the climax of the long rivalry between the Bhangis in league with the Ramgarhias and the Kanheyas in league with the Sukerchakias. It was a landmark in the 'consolidation of the numerous petty states into a kingdom'. It was also the prelude to the decisive political separation between the trans-Sutlej and Cis-Sutlej regions and the political bifurcation of the Sikh *Panth*. Ranjit's aggressive policy alarmed the Cis-Sutlej Sikh chiefs; the instinct of self-preservation and the urge to prevent the absorption of their principalities in Ranjit's expanding kingdom drove them into the arms of the English. Loyalty to common religious ideals could not override the mundane aspects of the political situation.

In 1805, when Yashwant Rao Holkar entered the Punjab with Lord Lake in close pursuit, Ranjit observed polite neutrality. After Holkar's retreat he came face to face with the Cis-Sutlej States. The Second Anglo-Maratha War destroyed Sindhia's influence, exercised through Perron, in the Cis-Sutlej region. Lord Lake had established political connection with some Cis-Sutlej chiefs; but this was given up by Cornwallis and Barlow, and the Jumna was established as the British frontier. Ranjit thought that the Cis-Sutlej region was now open to his arms. He led two expeditions, but before the region came com-

pletely under his grip the British interest there revived. In 1808 Jind, Kythai, Patiala and Nabha sought the Company's protection against their 'aggressive co-religionist'. Despite Minto's general policy of Non-intervention it was considered necessary to enter into an understanding with the Sikhs as a counter-measure against the projected joint invasion of India through the land route by Russia and France. Two British missions were sent to Persia—one under Malcolm from India and another under Sir Harford Jones from England. A mission sent to Kabul under Elphinstone contacted the Afghan ruler Shah Shuja at Peshawar. Metcalfe was sent to Lahore to negotiate with Ranjit Singh. Before the negotiations had advanced Ranjit led his third expedition into the Cis-Sutlej region. Meanwhile the outbreak of the Peninsular War in Europe had removed the possibility of a French invasion of India. Minto decided that it was no longer necessary to conciliate Ranjit Singh by acquiescing in the establishment of his power in the Cis-Sutlej region. So the Cis-Sutlej States were taken under the Company's protection. A British army marched into that region. Ranjit evacuated his recent acquisitions, such as Ambala and Faridkot. 'The car of Juggernaut rolled over the small Cis-Sutlej States'. The British frontier was pushed from the Jumna to the Sutlej.

Treaty of Amritsar (1809)

Ranjit now wanted 'security against the consequences which might ensue from the establishment of the British power on the Sutlej'. Metcalfe concluded a treaty with him at Amritsar in 1809. The British Government declared that it would have no concern with 'the territories and subjects of the Raja to the northward of the river Sutlej'. Ranjit Singh retained the territory he had possessed on the left bank of the Sutlej before the arrival of Metcalfe, but he was not to maintain in this part of his dominions 'more troops than were necessary for internal duties of that territory' and he was not to encroach upon other chiefs' possessions and rights.

This treaty barred the eastward expansion of Ranjit's kingdom and prevented the union of all Sikh territories in a single State. But it left him free to push his aggressive designs in the north as also in the west.

Conquests in the Punjab

Between the years 1806 and 1809 Kangra, under the rule of Sansar Chand with his capital at Nadaun, suffered from the in-

vasion of the Gurkhas under the able leadership of Amar Singh Thapa. Sansar Chand approached Ranjit Singh for help. After the treaty of Amritsar Ranjit occupied the fort of Kangra and reduced Sansar Chand to the position of a dependent chief. He came to terms with other hill chiefs and compelled Amar Singh Thapa to abandon his conquests on the right side of the Sutlej.

In the Punjab plains the territories of the other *Misls* were absorbed during the years 1809-28. Ranjit occupied Kasur, Sialkot, Shaikhupura and parts of Hariyana as also the surrounding country in the Jalandhar Doab. By 1809, says Elphinstone, 'almost the whole of the Punjab belonged to Ranjit Singh who in 1805 was but one of the many chiefs'. In 1810-11 the possessions of the Fyzullapuria *Misl*, in 1811 those of the Nakkai *Misl*, and in 1815 those of the Ramgarhia *Misl* were occupied. In 1821 Ranjit seized the territories of the Kanheya *Misl* which were being administered by his mother-in-law, Sada Kaur. The chief of the Ahluwalia *Misl* was reduced to the position of a subordinate ally. Thus a powerful military monarchy rose on the ruins of the trans-Sutlej *Misls*.

2. RANJIT SINGH AND THE AFGHANS

Disintegration of Abdali's empire

The powerful ruling dynasty established by Ahmad Shah Abdali at Kabul collapsed in the early years of the nineteenth century. When his son and successor, Timur Shah, died (1793), the Kabul Monarchy included, in addition to the Afghan provinces of Kabul, Balkh, Kandahar and Herat, the Indian provinces of Peshawar, Lahore, Kashmir and Multan. Moreover, the Amirs of Sind and the chiefs of Baluchistan were its vassals. His fifth son and successor, Zaman Shah (1793-1800), threatened invasion of Hindustan in the days of Sir John Shore and Lord Wellesley. Under Lord Wellesley's instructions the British Agent at Bushire 'induced the Court of Persia to keep Zaman Shah in perpetual check'. Moreover, he was kept busy by frequent internal revolts. He was finally dethroned and blinded by his elder brother Mahmud. He passed the remaining years of his life as a British pensioner at Ludhiana in the Punjab.

Mahmud (1800-1803) was deposed after a brief reign by his brother Shah Shuja (1803-9) whose reign was hardly less tragic than that of his predecessors. 'He wanted vigour; he wanted activity: he wanted judgement; and above all, he wanted money'.

In 1809 he was defeated by the powerful chiefs of the Barakzai clan who restored Mahmud and retained in their own hands the reins of power. Mahmud reigned as a puppet till his deposition by the Barakzai chiefs in 1818. He fled to Herat and lived there under Persian suzerainty till his death in 1829. By that time the whole of Afghanistan was in Barakzai hands; the Sadozai clan—to which Ahmad Shah Abdali belonged—thus lost its political power.

Shah Shuja met Elphinstone, Wellesley's envoy, at Peshawar in 1809. Soon afterwards, following his defeat, began long years of wandering, intrigue, and fruitless attempts to recover the lost throne. He lived for sometime as a prisoner in Kashmir. He went to Lahore, established political relations with Ranjit Singh, and received promises of help which were never intended to be fulfilled. The Maharaja took from him the great diamond Kohinur which Nadir Shah had seized in Delhi in 1739. The helpless refugee reached Ludhiana in 1816 and remained a British pensioner till his final adventure: involvement in the First Anglo-Afghan War.

Payanda Khan, the head of the Barakzai clan, was executed by Zaman Shah for political intrigue in 1799. He left 21 sons; the eldest among them, Fath Khan, made and un-made Amirs during the next two decades. He was principally responsible for the fall of Zaman Shah, the rise and fall of Shah Shuja, and the rise of Shah Mahmud. He asserted the Afghan supremacy in Sind and Baluchistan and subjugated rebellious Kashmir with the aid of Ranjit Singh. His brothers held most of the governorships except Herat. Among them Dost Muhammad rose into prominence by dint of ability. Fath Khan was murdered in 1818 by Mahmud; but the result was his loss of the throne and the seizure of power by Dost Muhammad. The latter gradually eliminated his brothers and began a long period of rule which was remarkable for vigour and ability. Ranjit Singh seized Peshawar in 1834. In the same year Dost Muhammad defeated Shah Shuja's attempt to recover the throne. In 1837 he failed to recover Peshawar in spite of a victory at Jamrud. His anxiety to recover Peshawar involved him in the First Anglo-Afghan War.

Ranjit Singh's conquests

Ranjit Singh's urge for westward expansion brought him into conflict with the Afghans led by the Barakzai brothers. Peshawar, as also several tribal districts along the Indus (Attock.

Kohat, Tank, Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan), Kashmir, Multan and Sind still owed allegiance—in most cases nominal—to the Kabul Monarchy. Between 1810 and 1824 he was busy in conquering these regions, and his military efforts were stubbornly resisted by the Barakzais.

In 1813 Ranjit co-operated with Fath Khan in re-establishing the suzerainty of Kabul over Kashmir. But Fath Khan did not give him the promised share of the spoils; so he occupied Attock from the Afghans. The Afghans advanced against him, but the Sikhs won a decisive victory at Chuch (1813). The Afghans lost their hold on the eastern side of the Indus, and Ranjit was left free to consolidate his power in this region.

In 1814 Ranjit made an unsuccessful attempt to conquer Kashmir, but success was achieved in 1819. Meanwhile Multan had been conquered (1818). The political troubles in Afghanistan following the murder of Fath Khan had weakened the Afghan resistance to the advance of the Sikhs. The mid-Indus region (Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan, Mankera) was then brought under Ranjit's control (1820-21). The Indus boundary was made secure as a barrier against Afghan advance into the Punjab.

Muhammad Azim Khan, the leading Barakzai brother, advanced to Peshawar. The Sikhs won a decisive victory at Nowshera (1823). They entered Peshawar, but it was difficult to keep the unruly Afghan tribes under subjection. Ranjit recognized one of the Barakzai brothers, Yar Muhammad Khan, as the tributary ruler of Peshawar. The final annexation of Peshawar took place in 1834. Meanwhile Ranjit collected tribute from Tank and Bannu (1824).

Ranjit Singh did not want to push his conquests beyond India's natural frontiers. He joined the English in the First Anglo-Afghan War because he knew that they would carry out their plan even without his co-operation, and in that case he would lose a share of the spoils. In the north-west frontier region he did not at first adopt the policy of direct administration. Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan, Tank and adjoining areas were kept under tributaries. The insurrections of the Wahabis led by Sayyid Ahmad of Bareilly compelled him to change his policy. A *jihad* was declared against Sikh rule (1826). Large sections of the tribal people joined the holy war. For a time Peshawar came under Wahabi control. Sayyid Ahmad proclaimed himself Caliph and struck coins. But differences with

the Yusufzais compelled him to retreat from Peshawar, and he fell in the battle of Melakot (1831). Between 1831 and 1836 Dera Ghazi Khan, Peshawar, Tank, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan were brought directly under Sikh administration. The military arrangements, including construction of forts, were intended to serve several purposes: to resist invasion from Afghanistan, to prevent an *en masse* gathering of the tribes, to facilitate the collection of the revenue and tribute, and to overawe recalcitrant tribes and keep open the means of communication. Hari Singh Nalwa played a memorable role as governor of Hazara and Peshawar.

Sind

Sind, nominally a province of the Afghan Empire created by Ahmad Shah Abdali, was ruled independently by Amirs belonging to a Baluchi tribe called Talpuris. There were three families, ruling in separate parts of the province, with their capitals at Khairpur, Hyderabad and Mirpur. A formal supremacy was claimed by the Hyderabad family. The territories of the Amirs included the important port of Karachi, the prosperous commercial centre of Shikarpur and the fortress of Gukkur which commanded the navigation of the Indus.

The importance of the Indus as a channel of commerce was realized by the English soon after their arrival in India, and in 1630 they secured a *farman* from Shah Jahan for trade in Sind. One of the measures taken by them to oppose Napoleon's invasion of India was the conclusion of a treaty in 1809 by which the Amirs bound themselves not to 'allow the establishment of the tribe of the French in Sind'. By another treaty, made in 1820, the Amirs engaged 'not to permit any European or American to settle in their dominions'.

The fear of a French invasion was replaced after Napoleon's fall by the fear of a Russian invasion through Persia. The possible route for such an invasion lay from Kandahar through Quetta and the Bolan Pass to the Indus Valley. Thus Sind acquired great political importance from the British point of view. In 1831 Alexander Burnes was sent to explore the possibilities of navigation of the Indus. His report indicated that the river might serve as an excellent route for commercial goods coming by sea, as well as by land *via* Herat, Kandahar and Quetta. Such goods would find a flourishing market at Shikarpur in Sind. In 1832 the Amirs of Hyderabad and Khairpur had to conclude a new treaty with the Company by which they

allowed all British subjects to use the roads in Sind as also the Indus for commercial purposes subject to three conditions: (1) No military stores were to be carried by the roads or by the river. (2) No armed vessels or boats were to pass through the river. (3) No English merchant should be allowed to settle in Sind. The treaty was commercial in character; its main purpose was to use the 'great facilities' afforded by the Indus 'for the disposal of the produce and manufacture of the British dominions both in Europe and in India'. But it was also looked upon as an instrument for the extension of British political influence. This point did not escape the attention of the Sindhis. One of them is said to have exclaimed: 'Alas! Sind is now gone, since the English have seen the river, which is the high road to its conquest'.

Ranjit Singh had his eyes on Sind, and on several occasions he demanded from the Amirs the tribute which they had formerly paid to the rulers of Kabul. After the death of the Wahabi leader Sayyid Ahmad the whole country from Peshawar to the borders of Sind on the bank of the Indus was brought under his firm control. The Nawab of Bahawalpur paid him an annual *nazrana*.

Shikarpur was Ranjit's main objective in the south. It was of great importance to the trade of the Indus as also of Central Asia, and more than half the population were Sikhs. He realized, however, that the exploration of Burnes and the treaty of 1832 gave the English a special interest in Sind and they would not like him to disturb the Amirs. Waiting for a few years he sent an army to Sind (1836), but the English persuaded him 'to lay aside his hostile intentions'. He deferred to their wishes because he feared that they might use his invasion of Sind as a pretext for putting an end to the alliance formed in 1809. But he did not give up his designs on Sind, and even in 1838 the Amirs were apprehensive of an invasion from Lahore. The Tripartite Treaty of 1838 compelled him to resign all hopes of securing Shikarpur.

3. RANJIT SINGH AND THE ENGLISH

The treaty of Amritsar (1809) laid the basis of Anglo-Sikh friendship which survived till the outbreak of the First Anglo-Sikh War (1845). It deprived Ranjit of the opportunity of being the sole ruler of the Sikhs. It barred his way to Sind. But it

did not prevent him from conquering the Afghan territories or from pushing his arms to the hill region to the west of the Sutlej. In the thirties he conquered Ladak, which had considerable trade in shawl wool, as also Iskardu which lay to the west of Ladak. He declined to intervene in favour of the Gurkhas in their war against the English (1814-16). After the war he maintained intercourse with them. The conquest of Ladak made him a neighbour of Nepal. He received an important mission from Nepal in 1837.

Despite occasional stress and strain Ranjit's relations with the English continued to be satisfactory till 1823. The strength of the alliance was not tested because both the parties were too busy with their own affairs. By 1823 Ranjit had become master of the Punjab, and the Company had established its paramountcy in the whole of India excluding the Punjab, Sind and Assam. Now 'the approximation to the British boundary of an ambitious prince' became an object of concern to the English, and they felt it necessary to check and curb Ranjit's power.

In matters relating to territorial issues in the Cis-Sutlej region Ranjit's claims were disallowed by the Company. But he was fully aware of his utter inability to contend with British arms, and this weakness forced upon him a conciliatory policy. He declined to help the Gurkhas (1814-16), the former Bhonsle Raja of Nagpur (1820), the exiled Peshwa Baji Rao II (1822), and the Raja of Bharatpur (1825). Yet 'the British suspicion of this restless neighbour was deep-rooted'. During the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824-26) they kept a watchful eye on him. Between 1827 and 1831 the Wahabi insurrection led by Sayyid Ahmad kept him busy and indirectly served the British interest. Although the British Government gave no direct aid to the Wahabis it allowed them to organize their campaigns from its territories. Free from the Wahabis, Ranjit turned to Sind and found himself checkmated by the English. He was the ruler of a land-locked kingdom. Its land routes to Central Asia were blocked by the hostile Afghans. Had he been allowed to annex Sind, he would have been able to open communication with other countries free from British control.

In 1831 Lord William Bentinck met Ranjit at Rupar. The suspected design of Russia to invade India made it necessary for the British Government to demonstrate its complete understanding with the ruler of the Punjab. Ranjit, on his part, wanted a demonstration of the British Government's recogni-

tion of him as the head of the *Khalsa*. There was, however, no real change in the British policy of weakening him. During the last decade of his reign Ranjit was really a subordinate ally of the Company, unable to oppose the views and policies of the British Government. As the contemporary German traveller Hugel says: 'Ranjit is as much independent of the British Indian Government as his position as a weaker neighbour can admit of'.

The last phase of Ranjit's relations with the Company was his involvement in the First Anglo-Afghan War.

4. RANJIT SINGH'S ARMY

Composition

It was through the skilful use of a well-trained, well-organized and well-led army that Ranjit Singh created an extensive and powerful kingdom. 'He created a regular disciplined professional army in the place of part-time levies of predatory horsemen' who had fought the battles of the *Misls* in the eighteenth century. The strength of the regular army was 4,061 (2,852 infantry and 1,209 artillery) in 1811. In 1838 it rose to 38,242 (29,617 infantry, 4,090 cavalry and 4,535 artillery). The bulk of the army was an irregular force, including contingents provided by *jagirdars*, which was only partly affected by European ideas and methods.

The *Khalsa* Army had two branches: State Army and *Jagirdari* Army. The State Army had two branches. The regular branch (*Fauji-i-Ain*) was divided into three sections: artillery, cavalry, infantry. The irregular branch was divided into two sections: *Fauji-sawari* or *Ghorcharah* and *Fauji-Kilayat*. The former, numbering 10,795 in 1838, were salaried horsemen who had to provide for themselves and their horses. There were frequent inspections of horses with reference to descriptive rolls. 'This type of organization kept in tact the spirit of clannish union and its old tendency of fighting under the immediate command of a natural leader, while it did not deny to the *Misldar* the benefits of co-operation'. The *Fauji-Kilayat* consisted of garrisons of forts, treasure guards, fort guards and peons or orderlies. The *Jagirdari* troops were employed on comparatively unimportant punitive expeditions.

The system of monthly payment in cash was borrowed from the East India Company. The average monthly salary of a

sepoy ranged between 7 rupees and $8\frac{1}{2}$ rupees, and that of a *subadar* between 20 rupees and 30 rupees. Payment, however, was irregular; the troops were usually in arrears for five or six months. This was one of the greatest defects of Ranjit's military organization. It is partly explained by the inefficiency of the revenue system which failed to provide for the regular flow of money into the royal treasury.

European officers

The military system which Ranjit introduced has been described as 'the Franco-British system in an Indian setting'. Great importance was attached to the *Fauji-Ain*. Convinced of the superiority of the European mode of warfare, Ranjit introduced division into brigades, the European training system based on French and British models, European weapons and tactics, and uniformity of dress. The lay-out of camps, order of marches, as also barrack and supply systems were subject to European influence.

Ranjit followed the Maratha tradition in employing European officers in his army. Battalions trained in the European fashion existed as early as 1807. Ventura and Allard—both of them Frenchmen—came in 1822. They were not originators of new ideas or new schemes. 'They merely gave a moderate degree of precision and competence to a system already introduced'. They were at first regarded by the people as undesirable intruders; but Ranjit gave them his unreserved confidence, and in course of time Allard became very popular. There were other European officers recruited from various nationalities: Italian, American, English, Spaniard, Greek, Russian, German, Austrian. Different lists give different numbers of European officers; these vary between 20 and 42. They remained a heterogeneous and disunited body, and the Sikh Sardars were jealous of them. Ranjit encouraged them to settle in the Punjab and acquire a permanent interest in the country. Allard and Ventura complied with his wishes. Unlike the French officers of Daulat Rao Sindhia, most of Ranjit Singh's European officers were sincerely loyal to him; only the attitude of Avitabile during the First Anglo-Afghan War was doubtful.

Strength and weakness

The efficiency of the Sikh Army in the closing years of Ranjit Singh's reign is acknowledged by a British official observer named Osborne. It could be easily moved; no wheel carriages were allowed on the march. Despite irregularity of pay-

ment, service in the regular army was very popular and recruits were easy to find.

Unlike the Maratha army, Ranjit's Army was not denationalised. He took recruits from different communities—Sikhs, Hindustanis, Gurkhas and Afghans; but the Sikhs formed the bulk of the army, and their rank and file possessed a strong *esprit de corps*. In some battalions the Sikhs were intermixed with the Hindustanis to counteract any mutinous disposition on either side. Ranjit organized his army in such a manner that communalism and localism could not hamper the growth of the military spirit and collective energy.

Among the defects of Ranjit's Army three points deserve special mention. The regular infantry was not accompanied by equally efficient artillery and cavalry. There were imperfections in training, discipline, control, command and provisioning of troops. The Sikh officers, with limited or little education, did not study the science of war; they depended chiefly upon their personal experience of war. The efficiency of the system suffered heavily after Ranjit's death when there was none strong enough to control and manage the powerful force built up by him. Even then the Sikh Army gave a very good account of itself in the two Anglo-Sikh Wars.

The introduction of western methods by Ranjit Singh has been criticised on two grounds. First, it was unnecessary because most of his important conquests were made by his unreformed army. But the reformed army was intended for use against the British, if necessary, and it justified itself when resistance to them became necessary after Ranjit's death. Secondly, 'the reformed army became in the end an intolerable burden which overwhelmed the civil constitution and brought about not only its own ruin but also that of the State'. This charge refers to the developments which took place after Ranjit's death. These were due primarily to the weakness of political leadership, and the army, even if had been left unreformed, could not have saved the State.

5. RANJIT SINGH'S ADMINISTRATION

Sikh Monarchy

Ranjit Singh's kingdom had no geographical, racial or religious homogeneity. It was a Sikh State in a special sense: the ruler was a Sikh, the State was based on Sikh traditions, and

the Army—the dominant element in the State—had a Sikh majority. But the non-Sikhs—Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists—constituted a majority of the population; and even though the government was not based on votes, the non-Sikh section of the population had political and economic weight. It was not a Punjabi State, for the Kashmiris, the Tibetans, the Frontier Pathans and the Multani Sindhis were not Punjabis. It was not 'Punjabi imperialism' or 'Punjabi nationalism' which carried Ranjit Singh to the heights of power; it was his own political and military genius and the military tradition developing since the days of Guru Gobind Singh which brought him success. Had there been any 'Punjabi imperialism' or 'Punjabi nationalism', or even Sikh solidarity, the Cis-Sutlej Sikh chiefs would not have resisted Ranjit Singh's overlordship and sought shelter under the British umbrella.

The heterogeneous State created by Ranjit Singh was a familiar political structure, and he made it acceptable to different religious communities by his liberal policy in religious matters. He did not rule as the instrument of a theocracy, nor did he establish 'a dictatorship of one community over another'. In his State 'there was an element of partnership with other communities'. Among the Hindus who served him in high positions were Mohkam Chand, Dewan Chand, Sawan Mal and the 'Jammu brothers'—Gulab Singh, Dhian Singh and Suchet Singh. Among the Muslims Azizuddin, along with his brothers Imamuddin and Nuruddin, played an important part. Ranjit Singh favoured the high-born Sayyids in the matter of revenue assessment and continued the Mughal system of offering State grants to Muslim theologians and men of learning. Although the Muslims ceased to be the ruling community the Maharaja's wise policy reconciled them to the new political order.

Like many other able and self-confident rulers Ranjit Singh sought to build up a centralized State. Although he relied upon the advice of his officers he 'completely centralized everything pertaining to government in himself'. He left the old *jagirdars* weak and created a new class of *jagirdars* dependent upon him. But his power was checked by the 'living principle of a commonwealth' which he recognized by acting in the name of the *Khalsa*. The sanctity of this principle was guarded by the Akalis, and its ultimate guardian was the Sikh population possessed of arms. The *Khalsa* tradition was expressed in the official form

of salutation in the Army (*Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh*) as also in the naming of the forts, e.g., Gobindgarh.

The Sikh Army had created the Sikh State ; it was an essential factor in its Government, expansion and defence. But in the governance of the State Ranjit did not use methods which were normally adopted by military Monarchies of the past or military dictators of the present century. He did not terrorize the people by reckless use of the police or the soldiery. He did not allow the Army to dictate policies or to dominate administration. It is wrong to describe Ranjit's system of government as military despotism. The spirit of the Army, as also of the people, was not one of abject submission to a cruel despot but of willing submission to competent and benevolent leadership.

Sources of income

Normally the public demand varied between two-fifths and one-third of the gross produce. There were various methods of assessment based on the old Mughal system, e.g., appraisal or division of the produce in the field, money rates, assessment per well, etc. The total amount of land-revenue exceeded one crore and fifty lakhs. Care was taken for the protection of crops in areas where soldiers marched or camped. In times of famine grain was distributed both for sowing and subsistence. Incentive was provided for extension of cultivation.

As regards excise and customs, taxation embraced 'every thing, every locality, every thoroughfare, every town and village, every article whatever—sold, imported or exported, domestic or foreign'. The country was intersected by preventive lines, and all commodities—including agricultural commodities—were liable to pay duties. But the rates were not very high and the system, as a whole, was not oppressive. This is proved by the fact that commerce was in a flourishing condition. Amritsar developed into a prosperous commercial city. Silk manufacturers at Multan were encouraged. The needs of a large army created a large demand for manufactures of different kinds.

Considerable income was derived from the salt mines which were farmed, as also from salt monopoly.

Financial administration

From the financial point of view there were three classes of districts: leased out, granted, directly administered. The most important class of officers consisted of men of wealth, position and influence—men like Hari Singh Nalwa, Sawan Mal and Avitabile—who managed the whole business of the tracts farmed

out to them without practically any accountability to the Central Government. The second class—military chiefs who held *jagirs* on condition of sending contingents—exercised practically unlimited authority within their jurisdiction. The third class consisted of local tax-gatherers known as *kardars*.

The arrangements for auditing the accounts were defective and provided scope for embezzlement. 'Ranjit Singh trusted to his memory for remembering complicated accounts of expenditure and for many years periodically allowed the rough memoranda of those who were responsible to him to be destroyed'. He sometimes balanced his accounts by realizing fees or aids from officers suspected of embezzlement, and if they refused to pay he plundered them. Even officers like Hari Singh Nalwa and Sawan Mal were guilty of corrupt practices.

Judicial administration

There were no special officers for judicial work, no organized tribunals, and no written laws. The chiefs generally heard both civil and criminal cases. The *qazis* and *qanungos* exercised privately and indirectly those functions which their predecessors had exercised in Mughal times. Private arbitration was extensively resorted to. The Maharaja heard appeals. Custom and caprice were the substitutes for regular laws. The usual punishment was fine; imprisonment was unknown, and capital punishment was rare except in disturbed districts like Peshawar and Hazara. Despite the rudimentary nature of these judicial arrangements the Punjab had peace and security, as the testimony of foreign travellers like Masson and Hugel indicate. 'Private property in land, the relative rights of land-holders and cultivators, the corporate capacity of village communities were all recognized'.

Estimate of Ranjit Singh

Ranjit Singh grew to manhood in a rude, rough and violent society. He did not have the benefit of the guardianship of a pious mother and an able, honest administrator. In this respect Shivaji had a great advantage over him. His mind was not soaked with religious and moral ideas which shaped Shivaji's life and work. This difference explains some of the defects and contradictions of his character. He combined 'puerile curiosity' with 'remarkable intelligence and rare sagacity'. Sometimes 'irrational' in his behaviour, he was often capable of acting with 'commendable self-restraint'.

Though illiterate, Ranjit had an intellect which excites our

admiration. He could improve the style of letters written in ornate Persian. He could remember not only complicated figures relating to accounts but also the name, position and recent history of 12,000 villages under his rule. The French traveller Jacquemont calls him 'a Bonaparte in miniature' and credits him with 'great personal valour, quickness of conception and promptitude in execution'. For the guidance of his officers in charge of military expeditions he issued instructions in great detail's. He established an administration which was 'rough but firm'; it was 'the nearest approach to the ideal of popular monarchy that was possible in those days and in those circumstances'. By conquering the frontier region and Kashmir he prevented those parts of India from being permanently incorporated in Afghanistan. In his relations with the British Government a policy of 'hesitancy and indecision' was forced upon him by the far superior power of the Company. It was no small credit that he was the only Indian ruler who did not accept the Subsidiary Alliance and submit to British Paramountcy.

6. FIRST ANGLO-AFGHAN WAR (1838-42)

Security of the North-West

At the beginning of Wellesley's Governor-Generalship the British authorities in India were apprehensive of invasion through the north-west by the ambitious Afghan ruler Zaman Shah. His fall from power (1800) was followed by rapid political changes in Afghanistan and the establishment of a strong Monarchy in the Punjab by Ranjit Singh which might serve as a barrier against any Afghan invasion. So the fear of Afghan invasion disappeared. Already, however, a new menace had appeared; it was Napoleon's project of invading India by the land route through Persia and Afghanistan. As a precautionary measure Malcolm, as Wellesley's envoy, concluded a treaty with Persia (1801) which provided for Anglo-Persian co-operation against any French attempt to establish themselves on any of the islands or shores of the Persian Gulf. But Persia turned to France soon afterwards to counteract the aggressive designs of her northern neighbour Russia which occupied Goergia in 1801. This was a set back for England. However, the treaty of Tilsit (1807) between Napoleon and Tsar Alexander I of Russia made it impossible for Persia to look to France as a counterpoise to Russia. Malcolm went to Persia on a second mission; and Sir

Harford Jones, an envoy from London, concluded a treaty (1809) by which Persia undertook to deny any European power a passage through her territory and England undertook to aid Persia in the event of an attack by a European power. At the same time Elphinstone concluded a treaty with the Amir of Kabul, Shah Shuja, which became abortive as a result of the latter's fall from power. These arrangements were intended to turn Persia into a buffer between the Franco-Russian alliance and India. In 1811 Russia attacked Persia, and by the treaty of Gulistan (1813) excluded Persian vessels from the Caspian Sea. Persia tried to strengthen her army by borrowing English officers.

There could be no effective Anglo-Persian military co-operation against Russia because 'Britain and India were too distant, Persia too weak, and Russia too near'. Defeated by Russia in a long war (1826-28), Persia concluded the humiliating treaty of Turkomanchai (1828). From this time Russian influence grew in Persia and English influence declined.

The establishment of Russian influence in Persia synchronized with the strengthening of Russia in south-eastern Europe. Russia defeated Turkey in 1828-29 in the War of Greek Independence and practically established her protectorate over Turkey by the treaty of Unkiar Skelessi (1833). The possibility of the establishment of Russian ascendancy in the Middle and the Near East through Persia and Turkey alarmed England. Lord Palmerston, England's Foreign Minister (1830-39), adopted a definitely anti-Russian policy. The First Anglo-Afghan War was a direct consequence of this policy.

Siege of Herat (1837-38)

The siege of Herat—the prelude to the First Anglo-Afghan War—was a part of the Persian programme, supported by Russia, for the recovery of Persian prestige in Central Asia. Persia's claims on Afghanistan were based on the conquests of Nadir Shah. The political dissensions among the Afghans seemed to offer a good opportunity. Dost Muhammad had seized Kabul; but Shah Shuja, though living as a pensioner of the Company at Ludhiana, made several efforts to regain the throne which he had lost in 1809. He advanced to Kandahar through Sind in 1833, but fled after being defeated by Dost Muhammad.

In 1836 the new Governor-General, Lord Auckland, found that the Persians were threatening Herat under Russian influence. Herat was an excellent base of military operations against

India: it commanded two military routes to India running *via* Kabul and Kandahar. Persia's advance towards Herat was tantamount to Russia's advance towards India.

Auckland was warned by the authorities in London of 'the dangerous character of Russian action in Persia' and urged 'to raise a timely barrier against the encroachments of Russian influence'. He sent Alexander Burnes to Kabul on a mission which, though ostensibly commercial, was really political. Two months after his arrival at Kabul (September 1837) the Persian siege of Herat began. Dost Muhammad was prepared for an alliance with the English, but he demanded a price which Auckland refused to pay: the recovery of Peshawar from Ranjit Singh. The Governor-General did not want to displease the Sikhs who were the Company's 'first friends and steadfast allies'. He also noted that 'the extensive dominions of Ranjit Singh and his superb army lay at the most vulnerable point of the frontier of British India'. Informed of Auckland's decision in February 1838, Dost Muhammad turned to the Russians and welcomed a Russian agent named Vitkevitch. Burnes left Kabul after the total failure of British diplomacy which he attributed to Auckland's 'do-nothing policy' (April 1838). British diplomacy failed in Persia as well. The British envoy at Teheran withdrew after unsuccessful attempts to persuade the Shah to give up the siege of Herat.

But the tide turned in favour of the English in the middle of 1838. An expeditionary naval force sent to the Persian Gulf by Auckland occupied an island near Bushire. About the same time the great assault on Herat failed (June 1838) and the Persians finally retreated from Herat three months later (September 1838). In response to British diplomatic representation Russia denied any design against India and recalled Vitkevitch. *Tripartite Treaty (1838)*

Meanwhile Auckland had taken an alarmist view: he had assumed that Dost Muhammad's overtures to Russia 'automatically involved Afghan hostility to British India'. So he had decided 'to permit or to encourage the advance of Ranjit Singh's armies upon Kabul ... and as a subsidiary to his advance, to organize an expedition headed by Shah Shuja'. In other words, the Russo-Persian menace was to be counteracted by removing the pro-Russian Amir (Dost Muhammad) and placing on the throne of Kabul a pro-British ruler (Shah Shuja); in this project the Sikh Army was to play the principal role, the British

Government being no more than a 'subsidiary'. As Ranjit Singh had supported Shah Shuja in his attempt at recovery of his throne in 1833-34, it was assumed that he would accept the British proposal. The Maharaja accepted it reluctantly; he realized that he would be left out if he declined to be a party and lose all political advantages if the English alone restored Shah Shuja through their own troops.

The Tripartite Treaty (June-July 1838), which prepared the ground for the First Anglo-Afghan War, was really a treaty between Ranjit Singh and Shah Shuja, guaranteed by the British Government. It confirmed the Maharaja in the possession of territories which he held on the banks of the Indus with their dependencies, i.e., Kashmir, Peshawar, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan, and Multan. No one was to cross the Indus or the Sutlej without his permission. As regards Sind, the treaty provided that Shah Shuja would relinquish all claims upon the Amirs, subject to their payment (to him) of such a sum as might be determined by the British Government; of this sum he would pay 15 *lakhs* to Ranjit Singh. This meant that the Amirs would no longer be tributaries of Kabul, and Ranjit Singh would entertain no designs on Sind. Shah Shuja bound himself and his successors not to enter into any negotiations with any foreign power without the consent of the British and Sikh Governments.

'Ostensibly Ranjit Singh had reached the summit of his ambition. He was acknowledged to be an arbiter in the fate of that (Afghan) empire which had tyrannised over his peasant forefathers and he was treated with great distinction by the Lord Paramount of India'. This remark of Cunningham is correct. But the prospect of having on his western frontier a ruler (Amir of Kabul) dependent upon the British was undesirable from his point of view. Moreover, the treaty marked the last stage in the development of British plans to resist Sikh expansion in Sind.

Auckland's initial purpose was that the expedition against Dost Muhammad should be undertaken by the troops of Ranjit Singh and Shah Shuja, and the British Government, as a 'subsidiary', would provide a 'sufficient number of officers for the direction of the Shah's army'. The treaty did not pledge the Company to send its soldiers beyond the frontier. But Ranjit Singh was a reluctant partner, and Shah Shuja's 'raw levies' could not fight with prospect of success. So Auckland had to

decide in favour of employment of the British army. The programme of a Sikh-Afghan expedition developed into a British scheme of invasion of Afghanistan.

Simla Manifesto (1838)

Auckland issued from Simla (October 1838) a long manifesto dealing with the origin and causes of the war and justifying his policy. The statement of the case against Dost Muhammad was 'a string of misrepresentations, deliberate distortion of facts and views, and misleading assumptions'. In 1839 an attempt was made to mislead the public by the issue of a Blue Book which contained 'garbled despatches' giving an 'entirely false impression' of Dost Muhammad's policy.

The most important criticism of Auckland's policy is that the withdrawal of the Persians from Herat (September 1838) had removed the excuse for war. Even after the removal of the threat to Herat he declared (November 1838) that hostilities would be commenced 'with a view to the substitution of a friendly power for a hostile power in Afghanistan, and to the establishment of a permanent barrier against schemes of aggression upon our north-west frontier'. Dost Muhammad did not form any alliance with Russia. His 'schemes of aggression' were directed against Peshawar, which was a Sikh—not a British—possession. Russia had officially disavowed any hostile designs upon British India. There was really no 'hostile power in Afghanistan' against which the British Government was called upon to take military action. If action had to be taken, it was extremely unwise to adopt so weak a candidate as Shah Shuja for the throne of Kabul. He had been cut off from his country for thirty years. He possessed neither political wisdom nor military and financial resources. Ranjit Singh was an unwilling ally; he pushed the Company from the position of a 'subsidiary' to that of the principal.

For this war—rightly described as 'the most unqualified blunder committed in the whole history of the British in India'—Auckland's responsibility must be shared by the 'Home' authorities. They approved of what he was doing, sometimes expressing misgivings and offering comments. They were mainly guided by their apprehension of Russian designs, and regarded the Afghan expedition as a part England's Central Asian policy.

Military developments (1839-42)

The British army commissioned for the conquest of Afghanistan was pompously styled the 'Army of the Indus'. The

supreme command was entrusted to Sir John Keane; its political management was in the hands of Macnaghten who was advised by Burnes. Ranjit Singh did not like that the British army should march through his territory. The main portion of the army marched from Ferozpur (in the Punjab) by way of Bahawalpur, Sind and Baluchistan, and entered Afghanistan through the Bolan and Khojak passes. This long and circuitous road 'violated all conditions of sound strategy' as also the treaties made with the Amirs of Sind in 1832. The Sikh Army advanced by way of Peshawar and the Khyber Pass.

The years 1839-40 were years of victories. Kandahar was occupied in April 1839. Ghazni was stormed in June 1839. Shah Shuja entered Kabul in August 1839. Kalat (in Baluchistan) was taken in November 1839. Dost Muhammad surrendered in November 1840 and was sent down as a prisoner to Calcutta.

Auckland believed that Shah Shuja was popular throughout Afghanistan; but his entry into Kabul was 'more like a funeral procession than the entry of a King into the capital of his restored dominions'. The freedom-loving Afghans looked upon him as a puppet in the hands of the foreign invaders. His British allies gave him no chance to play the role of an independent Afghan Amir; they openly made him a tool in their hands and thereby deprived him of Afghan sympathy. 'A double system of government, Afghan and English', prevailed.

The military situation was disturbed by three factors. First, after the death of Ranjit Singh (June 1839) the Sikh Government strongly opposed the passage of British troops through its territory. Secondly, the Russians advanced into Central Asia, and seemed to aim at the occupation of Khiva. Thirdly, the Afghan tribes, particularly the Ghilzais, gave much trouble. Auckland had kept 10,000 troops in Afghanistan; in April 1841 they were placed under the command of an old and incompetent officer, General Elphinstone. The presence of British troops in Afghanistan was repugnant to Afghan sentiment and imposed a heavy drain upon the financial resources of India. Towards the close of 1840 the Court of Directors suggested that the British army should either retreat or be strengthened by reinforcements. Advised by Macnaghten, Auckland refused to confess the failure of his policy by withdrawing the troops from Afghanistan.

Towards the close of 1841 the grievances of the Afghans burst out in a serious rebellion. The crisis was precipitated by

the misconduct of the British army of occupation. Among the officers who made themselves obnoxious to the Afghans was Burnes. He, as also some other British officers, were murdered. Akbar Khan, a son of Dost Muhammad, assumed the leadership of the Afghans. Facing defeat and starvation at Kabul, Macnaghten offered an agreement promising to withdraw British troops from Afghanistan on certain conditions (December 1841). He was treacherously murdered. Kabul was evacuated by the British troops; but on their way to India they were destroyed by snow, storm and Afghan bullets. Only a physician named Brydon survived and carried the terrible news to Jalalabad. Kandahar and Jalalabad were successfully defended by the British army.

Ellenborough

Auckland paid for his blunder by retirement. His successor, Lord Ellenborough (1842-44), reached Calcutta in February 1842. He decided to withdraw from Afghanistan because it was evident that Shah Shuja did not enjoy the support of the Afghans; but withdrawal was to be preceded by 'the re-establishment of British military reputation by the infliction of some signal and decisive blow upon the Afghans'. Shah Shuja, who had continued to reign as nominal Amir, was murdered by an Afghan (April 1842). Ghazni and Kabul were occupied by British troops (September 1842). Towards the end of 1842 the British army evacuated Afghanistan and returned to India. Dost Muhammad was released. He returned to Kabul and re-established his authority. He ruled as Amir till his death in 1863. He aided the Sikhs during the Second Anglo-Sikh War. He concluded treaties with the English in 1855 and in 1857 when the Persians renewed their threat to Herat. He made no attempt to disturb the English during the Crimean War and the 'Sepoy Mutiny'. The last twenty years of his career proved that Auckland had exaggerated his readiness to serve the Russian interest against the British.

7. ANNEXATION OF SIND (1843)

Auckland's policy

Bentinck's treaty (1832) with the Amirs of Sind brought the Lower Indus Valley within the British sphere of influence. When a war with Kabul became probable, Auckland began to look upon Sind as a frontier region where British ascen-

dancy was needed in the interest of the defence of India. A treaty concluded by Auckland in April 1838 provided that an accredited British minister would reside at the court of Hyderabad and have the right to move all over Sind with a military escort. This arrangement 'placed a loaded shell in the palaces of the Amirs to explode' at the pleasure of the Governor-General. The Tripartite Treaty (June-July 1838) ended Shah Shuja's nominal claim to suzerainty over the Amirs as also Ranjit Singh's lingering prospect of territorial expansion at their cost. The Amirs were now expected to co-operate in the British invasion of Afghanistan by consenting to the passage of the Company's troops through their territory. This meant abrogation of the article in the treaty of 1832 as to the use of the Indus for the conveyance of military stores. By a treaty concluded in December 1838 Khairpur became a protected State; its Amir engaged to submit his external relations to British control and to furnish troops and assistance during the impending Afghan War. The island of Bukkur was occupied for the purpose of securing the passage of the Indus. As the Amir of Hyderabad declined to allow the passage of the British troops through his territory, Karachi was occupied by a British force and the helpless Amir signed a treaty (March 1839), agreeing to accept a subsidiary force and to pay for its maintenance. A similar treaty was made with the Amir of Mirpur (1841).

As a result of these treaties, 'the confederacy of the Amirs was virtually dissolved', Sind was 'placed formally under British protection', a British force was fixed at Thatta or some other place to the westward of the Indus in Lower Sind, and the navigation of the Indus throughout Sind was rendered free of all toll. Auckland looked upon these British gains 'as the first advance' towards the 'consolidation' of British political influence and commerce in Afghanistan. Early in 1840 he contemplated 'the complete maintenance of the British superiority in Sind and the navigation of the Indus not only during the occupation of Afghanistan but permanently'.

Ellenborough and Napier

During the war in Afghanistan the Amirs were 'saddled with a general liability to help the British forces' and to contribute large amounts of money in order to maintain British troops in their midst whom they did not want. When that war was over, the Amirs were suspected of harbouring unfriendly feelings towards the British Government. Ellenborough, Auckland's

successor, was uneasy; but he was not sure at first whether it was really desirable to retain the existing position in the Lower Indus region. Matters passed into the hands of Sir Charles Napier who was sent to Sind in September 1842 with practically full powers of war and peace. He was 'always more under the influence of excitement than of reason'. He wrote in his diary: 'We have no right to seize Sind, yet we shall do so, and a very advantageous, useful, humane piece of rascality it will be'.

Napier prepared the ground for his 'rascality' by making against the Amirs 'certain vague charges of disaffection ... based on evidence now generally recognized to have been unsatisfactory'. A new treaty, considerably curtailing the rights of the Amirs, was sought to be forced upon them (December 1842). Even before the negotiations had started Napier annexed the left bank of the Indus and compelled the Amir of Khairpur to transfer his rights to his pro-British brother. The displaced Amir's family fled to Imamgarh, a desert fortress; it was blown up even though there was no resistance (January 1843). From certain intercepted letters Napier concluded that the Amirs were bent upon war and were assembling troops for the purpose. He marched against them and defeated their troops in a fiercely contested battle at Miani (February 1843). Six of the Amirs surrendered. Hyderabad was occupied. The Amir of Mirpur, who continued resistance, was defeated at Dabo (March 1843). The whole of Sind was formally annexed.

Napier spoke of the annexation of Sind as 'the tail of the Afghan storm'. The general historical view is that it was 'morally and politically' the 'sequel' of the Anglo-Afghan War. Mountstuart Elphinstone made an acid comment: 'Coming after Afghanistan, the annexation of Sind put one in mind of a bully who had been kicked in the streets and went home to beat his wife in revenge'. After the inglorious retreat from Afghanistan the pressure put on the weak and helpless Amirs was a cowardly demonstration of British imperial strategy. The methods adopted by Napier must be condemned; at the same time it must be noted that 'Ellenborough was determined from the very beginning to carry through the project by fair means or foul'. The Court of Directors as also the British Cabinet condemned their performance, but there was no reversal of the accomplished fact.

8. FALL OF SIKH MONARCHY

The Punjab after Ranjit Singh

At the time of Ranjit Singh's death (June 1839) the Sikh Monarchy, apparently powerful, suffered from fatal maladies. The concentration of power in the hands of the Maharaja, which had been a source of strength in his time, now became a source of weakness. His only legitimate son and successor, Kharak Singh, was an imbecile. After Kharak Singh's death (November 1840), followed immediately afterwards by the death of his son Nao Nihal Singh, there remained nobody with an undisputed claim to the throne. The Army—the pillar of the State—was far less strong than it appeared to be. Ranjit Singh's able generals—Mohkam Chand, Dewan Chand, Hari Singh Nalwa, Ram Dayal—were already dead. 'Only crafty designing men, either weaklings or traitors, survived to command the Sikh forces'. Already discontent was growing among the troops as a result of irregularity of payment. The appointment of unworthy officers had developed the spirit of indiscipline. The Lahore Government, continuing the policy of friendship with the Company, permitted the British troops to pass through its territory—once, when they were fleeing from Afghanistan, and again, when they were marching back to Afghanistan to avenge their defeat. Their marches caused commotion and dislocation in the Punjab.

According to Cunningham, Ranjit Singh was reluctant to put the Sikhs in high positions because they were not likely to be fully subservient to one who, like them, was an equal member of the *Khalsa*. So he 'sought for strangers ... in whom he could repose some confidence as the creatures of his favour'. He showed extraordinary favour to the 'Jammu brothers' who were Hindus (Rajputs): Gulab Singh, Dhian Singh, Suchet Singh. They were given the unique distinction of being raised to the rank of Raja. Gulab Singh kept himself engaged principally in consolidating and extending his power in the hills. Dhian Singh held the principal position in the court as chief minister, and this office was inherited by his son Hira Singh after his murder in 1843. Lal Singh and Tej Singh were not Sikhs; these two *Purbia* Brahmins, coming from Rohtas and Meerut respectively, became the leaders of the State and the Army. After Ranjit Singh's death 'his kingdom was dominated by the non-Sikhs who could not be expected to develop or even

sympathize with the sentiments of the Sikhs which alone could be a secure foundation for the building up of a Sikh Kingdom'.

Succession

During the brief reign of the imbecile Kharak Singh (June 1839—November 1840) the real power was exercised by his young son Nao Nihal Singh, whose primary object was to destroy the ascendancy of the 'Jammu brothers'. He died as the result of an accident while he was on his way back after performing the funeral rites of his father. It was generally believed that the accident was deliberately engineered by the 'Jammu brothers'.

The candidate for the throne, Sher Singh, Ranjit Singh's reputed son, secured the support of Dhian Singh and Clerk, the British Political Agent at Ludhiana. As his paternity was doubtful and as Dhian Singh was disliked by the majority of the Sikh chiefs, an opposition was formed by the Sandhanwalia chiefs. But Sher Singh occupied Lahore (January 1841), Dhian Singh became chief minister, and the Sandhanwalia chiefs fled to British territory.

The new Maharaja was a voluptuary with few kingly qualities. He was unable to control the troops who, exasperated by mounting arrears of pay and demoralized by absence of competent officers, committed gross acts of indiscipline. In addition to plundering on a large scale they committed many murders. 'For six to eight weeks the city of Lahore was turned into a veritable hell'. Sher Singh made overtures to the British Government and was prepared to throw himself on its protection; a British force became ready to move into the Punjab. Nothing, however, happened because he was vacillating.

Military Panchayats

With a view to conciliating the Sikh Army the Lahore Government took a step with far-reaching consequences. It invited two representatives from each Army unit, held parleys with them, and agreed to raise the soldiers' pay. The immediate result was the partial restoration of discipline in the Army. The long-term result was the formation of military *panchayats* which began to interfere in political affairs and administration. The consequences are thus described by Cunningham: 'The relation of the army to the State had become wholly altered; it was no longer the willing instrument of an arbitrary and genial Government, but it looked upon itself, and was regarded by others, as

the representative body of the Sikh people, as the *Khalsa* itself, assembled by tribes or centuries to take its part in public affairs. The efficiency of the army as a disciplined force was not much impaired, for a higher feeling possessed the men, and increased alacrity and resolution supplied the place of exact training. They were sensible of the advantage of systematic union, and they were proud of their armed array as the visible body of Gobind's (Guru Gobind Singh's) commonwealth (*Khalsa*). As a general rule, the troops were obedient to their appointed officers, so far as concerned their ordinary military duties, but the position of a regiment, a brigade, of a division, or of the whole army, relatively to the executive government of the country, was determined by a committee or assemblage of committees termed a *panch* or *panchayat*, i.e., a jury or committee of five, composed of men selected from each battalion, or each company

Behind this unprecedented change lay the Sikh principles of equality and democracy as also the public distrust of weak political leadership and the fear of British aggression. But the Army, guided by *panchayats*, could not really formulate policies or provide stable administration. Its imperious assertion of power disorganized the machinery of the State, promoted political factions, and drove some leading men of the court to safeguard their personal interests by secret understanding with the British. It produced no leader like Ranjit Singh who could use the valour of the Sikhs for constructive political purposes.

Political changes : 1843-45

The virtual breakdown of the governmental machinery provided opportunities for political murders. Maharani Chand Kaur, widow of Kharak Singh, was beaten to death by her female attendants, probably at the instance of Sher Singh (June 1842). The Sandhanwalia chiefs returned to Lahore. Sher Singh, his son Pratap Singh, and Dhian Singh were murdered by them (September 1843). Hira Singh, son of Dhian Singh, gained the support of the Army by promising higher pay, occupied Lahore, liquidated some of the Sandhanwalia chiefs, and placed Ranjit Singh's reputed son, Dalip Singh, on the throne. As the new Maharaja was about five years of age, his mother, Maharani Jindan, became regent. She was a capable and courageous lady, but notorious for her licentious character. Hira Singh became chief minister. He crushed his jealous uncle, Raja Suchet Singh, who supported the rebellion of Kashmira Singh and Peshawara

Singh, reputed sons of Ranjit Singh. Suchet Singh and Kashmira Singh, as also a Sandhanwalia chief who supported the reputed princes, were killed in battle. Gradually Hira Singh, aided by his family priest Jalla Pandit, removed or undermined the influence of all his rivals. 'Secretly and unsparingly he uprooted the old families; lopped off the *Sardars* of note and office-bearers of long services; and then grafted in their places creatures of his own'. But his power was short-lived. Jindan's hostility led to his flight and death (December 1844); Jalla Pandit shared his fate.

Power now fell into the hands of Jindan. She installed her brother Jawahir Singh, 'a weak, vain, besotted debauchee', as chief minister (May 1845). Her paramour, Lal Singh, became the most influential person in the administration. The new regime was disliked by the military *panchayats*; they thought of putting Peshawara Singh on the throne with Gulab Singh as chief minister. Jawahir Singh got Peshawara Singh murdered by Chatar Singh Atariwala whose daughter was betrothed to Dalip Singh. The infuriated military *panchayats* condemned Jawahir Singh as 'a traitor to the Commonwealth'. He was publicly shot (September 1845). Lal Singh and Tej Singh became, respectively, chief minister and commander-in-chief.

The Sikh Monarchy was now practically on the verge of dissolution, and many leading men, including Lal Singh, Tej Singh and Gulab Singh, thought that acceptance of British protection was preferable to the precarious rule of the 'military *panchayats*. The Army, genuinely believing that it was saving the 'Commonwealth', was actually undermining its foundations. A State nominally ruled in the name of a boy King by a licentious queen-regent and an equally licentious chief minister, but actually controlled by a leaderless Army, was a natural prey to foreign aggression.

British designs

Ranjit Singh's involvement in the Anglo-Afghan War brought the Punjab directly within the sphere of British political and military plans. His death, and the chaos and confusion which followed upon it, led some British officials to formulate ambitious designs. In 1840-41 there were talks about adding the trans-Indus region to Afghanistan (which was then under the nominal rule of Shah Shuja), and even of marching on Lahore to bring Sher Singh to the position of a protected prince. While escorting the families of Shah Shuja and Zaman

Shah to Kabul Major Broadfoot marched through the Punjab with demonstrations of force. Ellenborough consulted the Duke of Wellington about 'the general principles upon which a campaign against the Punjab should be conducted'.

These plans were temporarily upset by the British disaster in Afghanistan, but an aggressive policy gradually took shape. There was active British intrigue with Gulab Singh, Dhian Singh, Lal Singh and Tej Singh. Friendly contact was established with General Ventura. Orders were issued for assembling of a reserve force of 15,000 men at Karnal or Ferozpur (1842). Sind was conquered, and the Sikh principality of Kaithal (near Karnal) was annexed (1843). All these measures were apparently intended to prepare the ground for an invasion of Sikh territory. In 1843 Ellenborough wrote: 'The time cannot be very distant when the Punjab will fall into our management'. Early in 1844 he actually fixed 15 November 1845 as the date on which the British army would be ready for operations in the Punjab. When he left India the total strength of the British army on the Punjab frontier stations was about 18,000 men with 66 guns.

Policy of Hardinge

The situation was one of 'armed truce', as Ellenborough said; it was inherited by his successor, Sir Henry (later Lord) Hardinge, who assumed office as Governor-General in July 1844. He was an experienced military officer. He had a competent associate in the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Hugh Gough. The strength of the army on the Punjab frontier stations was raised to 40,000 men with 94 guns. There were 70 large boats on the Sutlej and 56 pontoons at Ferozpur intended obviously for transport of British troops into Sikh territory. From the British point of view these measures were 'preparations of a defensive kind'. Such preparations were not called for by the situation in the Punjab. In September 1843 Ellenborough wrote that there was 'no movement' against the British. Even in July 1844 he wrote that there was no chance of disturbance of peace in the Punjab.

The assemblage of British troops near the Punjab frontier alarmed the Sikhs. They naturally drew the inference that an invasion was imminent. Their suspicion was strengthened by the arrival of Major Broadfoot as British Agent in November 1844. His conduct during his march through the Punjab in 1841 had been provocative. Now he declared the Cis-Sutlej territory

of Dalip Singh to be under British protection, and he began to act as if it was British territory. He created dissensions in the Lahore court. He conspired with Gulab Singh, Tej Singh, Lal Singh and the governor of Multan. One of his subordinates described him as 'the prime mover, by many considered the cause' of the First Anglo-Sikh War. It was he who created the situation pushing the Sikh Army to begin the hostile movement. Technically the British Government got the opportunity of appearing to act on the defensive.

Sikh reaction

The so-called defensive preparations of Ellenborough and Hardinge and Broadfoot's nakedly hostile activities alarmed the Sikh Army and created a general impression in the Punjab that the political legacy of the *Khalsa* was in imminent peril. The annexation of Sind was a telling demonstration of British aggression. One of Napier's speeches, as also his actions on the Sind-Punjab frontier, were indications that the British were going to war with the Sikhs. The secret British plans to invade the Punjab were not unknown to the Lahore Government. Though never officially declared, 'they were believed by all parties (in the Punjab), and they were held to denote a campaign, not of defence, but of aggression'.

Suspicion and fear were the prevailing sentiments in the Sikh Army, but opinion was divided in regard to the action called for by the crisis. One section was eager to take the offensive which was considered to be the superior military strategy; the rest preferred to wait. In October 1845 Hardinge wrote that 'as yet no cause of war has been given'. On 13 December, however, the Sikh Army crossed the Sutlej. The war party in Lahore had gained the upper hand during the intervening weeks. This was due to the evil counsel of Lal Singh and Tej Singh who, like some Sikh chiefs, thought that 'they had everything to gain if the army with its system of *panchayats* dashed itself to pieces against the English'. But the 'shrewd' *panchayats*, says Cunningham, 'would not have heeded the insidious exhortations of such mercenary men' if they had 'observed no military preparations on the part of the English'.

First Anglo-Sikh War (1845-46)

The war began in December 1845. The British forces numbered between 20,000 and 30,000 men; the Sikhs, under the overall command of Lal Singh, numbered about 50,000. Lal Singh, who had secret contact with the British, deliberately

lost a definite advantage by refusing to make a sudden attack on Ferozpur which was weakly protected by a small British garrison. He took his army to attack the main British army under the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Gough, at Mudki, twenty miles from Ferozpur. He left the field after the battle had begun; the leaderless Sikhs were repulsed after dogged resistance (18 December 1845). Three days later (21 December 1845) Gough attacked the Sikh Army at Ferozshah (Ferozshahr). A grim battle was fought for two days; the British army was driven by the Sikhs into a desperate position. Hardinge, who was present in the battlefield, 'thought that it was all up'. The Sikhs lost the chance of decisive victory because Lal Singh left the field with most of his guns and men during the night on 21-22 December. Next morning Tej Singh left with his troops. The battle was finally lost to the Sikhs. Hardinge attached such importance to this 'terrible' lesson that he recommended Gough's recall and was then empowered by the Queen to take the command of the army personally.

'The Sikh cause was doomed, having traitors in command'. While Gough waited for fresh troops, guns and ammunitions, Lal Singh and Tej Singh gave him respite by waiting quietly for a month. A loyal Sikh commander, Ranjodh Singh Majithia, surprised Sir Harry Smith, a veteran of the Peninsular War who had fought at Waterloo, at Baddowal (21 January 1846). The next engagement took place at Aliwal (28 January 1846) where Smith won a 'brilliant victory'. In the final battle, fought at Sobraon (10 February 1846), Lal Singh and Tej Singh, as usual, deserted the battlefield; the leaderless Sikhs retreated after a heroic fight in 'circumstances of discreet policy and shameless treason'. As the two traitors broke the bridge of boats on the Sutlej a large number of Sikhs were drowned in the river while trying to cross it. A British force reached Lahore unopposed on 20 February 1846.

The British owed their success primarily to the services rendered to them by three 'mercenary' non-Sikh leaders of the Sikh State. Lal Singh and Tej Singh deserted their troops in the battlefield. Lal Singh regularly supplied to the British information about the disposition of the Sikh Army. Gulab Singh stopped sending rations and supplies to the troops. After the battle of Aliwal he concerted plans with Hardinge for bringing about the defeat of the Sikh Army. The Sikh soldiers fought with indomitable courage and determination, but these qualities

alone could not bring victory against the well-led and well-supplied British army. Their role in the war justified Ranjit Singh's policy of adopting European methods of war; at the same time their disaster testified to the weakness of his policy of employing 'strangers' in high positions in his State.

Treaties of Lahore (1846)

Hardinge considered it inexpedient to annex the Punjab; he did not have at his disposal a force large enough to control a martial population. There were difficulties in the way of imposing the Subsidiary Alliance on the minor Maharaja; it would have meant 'keeping on foot the rule of a selfish body of time-serving intriguers' who would serve as his ministers. He decided to keep the question open and introduced a complicated political arrangement by the first treaty of Lahore (9 March 1846). All the territories of the Lahore Government lying to the south of the Sutlej were handed over to the British Government. The Jalandhar Doab (between the Bias and the Sutlej) was annexed to the Company's dominions. In lieu of part of the war indemnity of one and a half *crore* of rupees the hill region between the Bias and the Indus, including Kashmir and Hazara, was ceded to the Company. Kashmir (including Jammu) was given to Gulab Singh in independent sovereignty. The Sikh Army was to be reduced to 25 battalions of infantry (800 each) and 12,000 cavalry. Thirty-six guns of the Sikhs, in addition to those already captured, were surrendered. British troops were to be allowed free passage through the Punjab when necessary. The limits of the Maharaja's territory were not to be changed, and no European, British or American subject was to be employed in his service, without the consent of the British Government. The British Government was not to interfere in his internal administration. By a supplementary Agreement concluded two days later it was provided that an adequate British force would be stationed in Lahore till in the end of 1846. The transfer of Kashmir (including Jammu) to Gulab Singh was formalized by a separate treaty (16 March 1846) and the price which he was required to pay to the Company was 75 *lakhs* of rupees.

As a result of these arrangements Ranjit Singh's territories were divided into three parts: one came directly under British control, one was transferred to Gulab Singh, and one remained under the rule of his successor. Apart from reduction in size, the Lahore State was weakened by the limit placed on the size of its army as also by some restrictions associated with the sys-

tem of Subsidiary Alliance. The conferment of the independent sovereignty of Kashmir was an ample reward for Gulab Singh's treachery to the Sikh State. Lal Singh was rewarded by appointment as the minor Maharaja's chief minister.

The two traitors were jealous of each other. Lal Singh instigated the governor of Kashmir, Shaikh Imamuddin, not to hand over the valley to Gulab Singh. Henry Lawrence, British Agent in Lahore, suppressed this 'rebellion' by military force. Lal Singh, found guilty after open trial, was deported to British territory (December 1846). This incident led to the conclusion of the second treaty of Lahore or the treaty of Bhyrowal (16 December 1846). It was formally stated that the chiefs of the Lahore State 'solicited the interference and aid of the British Government for the maintenance of an administration and the protection of the Maharaja' during his minority. Jindan was trying to win over the chiefs to 'a scheme of independent government of which she herself was to be the head', but some of them preferred British control. The dissensions at the court enabled the British Government to dictate terms. By the terms of the revised treaty the British Resident was invested with 'full authority to direct and control the duties of every department' although there was to be a Council of Regency. Jindan was not a member of this Council, but provision was made for her maintenance. A British force was to remain in Lahore and the British Government would be 'at liberty to occupy with British soldiers any fort or military post in the Lahore territories'. These arrangements were to remain in force till the expiry of Dalip Singh's minority (4 September 1854).

British Protectorate

The second treaty of Lahore was 'a distinct march in the direction of annexation'. Henry Lawrence, as British Resident, assumed the entire responsibility of governing the Lahore State. Among the British officers who served under him with marked ability were his brothers (John and George Lawrence), Nicholson, Herbert Edwardes, Lake and Lumsden. His chief Indian adviser was the traitor Tej Singh. As Jindan was, in Henry Lawrence's own words, 'the only effective enemy' to British policy, she was put in confinement in a fort.

Hardinge was succeeded as Governor-General by Lord Dalhousie (January 1848). Frederick Currie became Resident in Lahore in place of Henry Lawrence. As early as 1845 he had expressed his view against 'setting up a native Government' in

the Punjab instead of making it a part of British India. He, as also the new Governor-General, faced a situation in which war was almost inevitable. The arrangements made by the second treaty of Lahore were 'temporary in their nature, and they could only result either in the annexation of the country or in a resumption of its independence'. Dalhousie, as the record of his Governor-Generalship shows, was a firm annexationist. But there were difficulties, for the Sikh aristocracy resented 'the fine mesh of British administration which had overspread their land', and 'the Sikh people, who had fought with determination in the war just over, were hardly likely to settle down without a further struggle'.

Second Anglo-Sikh War (1848-49)

The occasion for war arose out of a dispute at Multan. Its governor, Mulraj, resigned because he was asked to pay an increased annual revenue. The resignation was accepted, and a new Sikh governor, accompanied by two British officers, Agnew and Anderson, arrived at Multan to take charge (April 1848). Agnew was wounded by an unknown assailant; Anderson was wounded by some horsemen. This was the signal for a local rising at Multan, and Mulraj reluctantly assumed its leadership. The details of the attacks on the two British officers and the purposes behind these outrages are obscure. Dalhousie wrote: 'The native aristocracy of the country seem to have satisfied themselves that our object has been to retain the country, and that this could be prevented only by timely resistance. The sending of European officers to relieve the chief of Multan, and to take possession of the country and fort, seems to have removed the last lingering doubt upon the subject'.

Two steps taken by the British Government inflamed the already excited Sikhs. First, Jindan was deported to Benares on the suspicion that she was the instigator of the violence at Multan. The real reason was the British fear that she might become the rallying point of a general rebellion. Secondly, Sardar Chatar Singh Atariwala, governor of Hazara, was an influential Sikh leader. His daughter was betrothed to the minor Maharaja. The British authorities thought that such a matrimonial alliance would make Chatar Singh too powerful; so they put off on various pretexts the date of celebrating the marriage. Moreover, a British officer named Abbot, who acted as Chatar Singh's adviser, behaved in such a manner in regard to the administration of Hazara that the Sardar felt himself humiliated. The

Resident supported Abbot and decided to punish Chatar Singh with dismissal from office as also forfeiture of *jagirs*. Chatar Singh's son Sher Singh, who had been sent to suppress the outbreak at Multan, joined Mulraj (September 1848). Chatar Singh seized Peshawar (October 1848) and captured Attock (January 1849).

Dalhousie treated the rebellion of Sher Singh and Chatar Singh as a legitimate cause of war against the State of Lahore, although the minor Maharaja's Government was under the complete control of the Resident and there was no evidence of a general anti-British conspiracy among the chiefs at Lahore. Operations began in November 1848; Lord Gough, the Commander-in-Chief, assumed the leadership. The advancing British army faced the Sikhs led by Sher Singh. After suffering a defeat at Ramnagar on the left bank of the Chenab, he crossed the Chenab and fought a pitched battle at Chilianwala on the right bank (January 1849). It was really a drawn battle; both parties fought hard, the British failing to occupy the ground they had gained, and the Sikhs re-taking the guns they had lost. The impression made upon the public mind was, observed the President of the Board of Control, 'stronger than that caused by the Kabul massacre'. It was decided to send Sir Charles Napier to replace Gough; but the Commander-in-Chief recovered his reputation before Napier's arrival. The tide had already begun to turn against the Sikhs. Multan had been occupied by the British forces a few days before Chilianwala; Mulraj unconditionally surrendered three weeks after that battle. The British troops released from Multan joined Gough. Chatar Singh joined Sher Singh, but they were defeated and completely routed by Gough at Gujarat on the right bank of the Chenab (February 1849). The disaster of the Sikhs was due mainly to bad leadership. A general surrender of the Sikh chiefs and soldiers followed (March 1849). An old Sikh soldier saluted the pile of surrendered arms and exclaimed: 'Today Ranjit Singh is dead'.

An Afghan contingent sent by Dost Muhammad took part in the battle of Gujarat on the Sikh side. Defeat was followed by retreat.

Annexation

Dalhousie decided to annex the Punjab. Dalip Singh formally resigned his sovereignty. He was granted a pension and required to reside at such place as the Governor-General might

select. A proclamation announcing the annexation was issued on 30 March 1849.

The logic of the war has been questioned mainly on two grounds. First, when the British army marched against the army of Sher Singh the Resident declared that it was 'not an enemy to the constituted Government' and its purpose was merely 'to restore order and obedience'. But 'the constituted Government' was overthrown after victory, and its territory was annexed. Secondly, the minor Maharaja was really a ward of the British Government under the second treaty of Lahore. 'It was a mockery to punish him for the fault of his subjects'. He had no part in Sher Singh's rebellion; only one member of the Council of Regency, out of eight, joined the rebels, and another was only suspected; and 20,000 subjects of 'the constituted Government' fought on the British side. Yet Dalhousie declared that 'the Sikh nation has called for war'.

It has been argued that, but for British 'interference', the Punjab was 'bound either to split up into various independent States, or, as was more probable, to become in whole or in part the prey of some external conqueror'—Dost Muhammad, for instance. The second treaty of Lahore provided adequate guarantee against any such eventuality. The suppression of Sher Singh's rebellion, with the support of the Council of Regency and the participation of 20,000 Sikh soldiers, provided no excuse for converting 'interference' into annexation.

The real cause of the fall of the Sikh Monarchy was the failure of the Sikh community to produce a leader who could govern the State properly after Ranjit Singh's death. Had such a leader appeared, either as King or as a minister, there would have been no occasion for the emergence of *military panchayats* grasping at political power. The great Maharaja's successors, and the ministers who seized power, were incapable of preserving the heritage of the *Khalsa*. The treachery of the chiefs rendered futile the valour of the people.

THE NORTH-EAST

I. THE HIMALAYAN STATES

Early British relations with Tibet

British efforts to open Tibet to trade began in the late eighteenth century. After 1750 Tibet under Chinese suzerainty became a forbidden land. The conquest of Nepal by the Gurkhas in 1768 strangled Tibetan trade with North India. The Famine of 1770 drew the attention of the Court of Directors to the economic difficulties of Bengal and indirectly stimulated efforts to extend her trade. Warren Hastings commissioned the missions of George Bogle (1774) and Samuel Turner (1783) to Tibet. Bogle failed to secure permission for European agents to visit Lhasa. Turner also failed as a diplomat. The Chinese later expelled the Gurkhas who had invaded Tibet in 1855, but they refused to permit trade between Tibet and Bengal.

Early British relations with Nepal

A Gurkha chief named Prithvi Narayan conquered the valley of Khatmandu in 1768. From this central position the Gurkhas pushed towards both east and west. In the early years of the nineteenth century they occupied Kumaon, Garhwal and the Simla hills. In the Sutlej region they were opposed by the Sikhs. Amar Singh Thapa made peace with Ranjit Singh in 1809, abandoning his conquests on the right side of the Sutlej.

In 1792 the British Government concluded a commercial treaty with the Gurkhas and sent Kirkpatrick on a mission to Khatmandu, but no tangible advantage was secured. Another commercial treaty was made some years later, and Knox served as Resident at Khatmandu for two years (1802-4). Wellesley recalled him and cancelled the alliance.

After the occupation of Gorakhpur by Wellesley from the Nawab of Oudh in 1801, the northern frontier of the Company's territories was conterminous with that of the Gurkha territories over a distance of 700 miles. The ill-defined condition of the frontier and the aggressive attitude of the Gurkhas made frontier incidents inevitable. 'The concessions of Barlow and the expostulations of Minto proved equally futile'. In 1814 a Gurkha attack on some British outlying stations led to war.

Anglo-Napalese War (1814-16)

The decision to make war was made by the Governor-General, Lord Moira, who also planned the campaign. In a four-pronged attack on the extended frontier 34,000 men were employed against 12,000 Gurkhas. The commander of the main Gurkha army was Amar Singh Thapa. The Gurkhas were good fighters, and the difficult geography of the zone of war was in their favour. The British generals were unfamiliar with hill fighting, and their movement was checked by the difficulties of transport. After some serious reverses General Ochterlony occupied Kumaon and compelled Amar Singh Thapa to surrender the strong fort of Malaon (May 1815). The Gurkhas opened negotiations for peace; a treaty was concluded at Sagauli (November 1815), but they refused to ratify it. Ochterlony advanced into the interior of Nepal and secured a victory at Makwanpur (February 1816). The Gurkhas then ratified the treaty of Sagauli.

The war brought to the Company three important advantages. First, the Gurkhas ceded Garhwal and Kumaon with the greater portion of the *Terai*, i.e., the forest belt along their southern border. The ceded area included the Simla hills. Soon foundations were laid for hill stations like Simla and Kasauli. Secondly, the Gurkhas withdrew permanently from Sikkim where they had established their political control in 1791-93. Thirdly, they received a British Resident at Khatmandu. This was the beginning of regular diplomatic intercourse between British India and Nepal. The Gurkhas never again broke friendly relations with the British, and the British districts contiguous to Nepal were never again subjected to their raids.

Lord Moira was created Marquess of Hastings in 1817 for his success in the Nepal War.

Sikkim

At the end of the Anglo-Nepalese War the British Government concluded a treaty with Sikkim (1817). Darjeeling was ceded by Sikkim in 1835. In 1849 two Englishmen touring in Sikkim were arrested by the Raja, probably because they acted in a high-handed manner and entered into Tibetan territory. Dalhousie punished him by annexing the hill tracts of Darjeeling west of the Tista and the Murung area in the *Terai*; moreover, his allowance was stopped.

Bhutan

In the eighteenth century Bhutan exercised considerable

political influence in the principality of Cooch Behar in North Bengal. During the administration of Warren Hastings a British force was sent to repulse the Bhutanese invaders from Cooch Behar; this was followed by the conclusion of a treaty between the Company and Bhutan (1774) which ended all political relations between Bhutan and Cooch Behar. Hastings sent several missions to Bhutan under Bogle, Hamilton and Turner; some commercial advantages were secured.

In the early years of the nineteenth century the relations between British India and Bhutan were strained by border disputes. The position became serious after the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824-26). After occupying Assam the British cast covetous eyes on the narrow strip of territory, at the base of the Bhutan hills, between the river Dhansiri (in Assam) on the east and the river Tista (in Bengal) on the west. It was intersected by 18 *duars* (doors, passes)—7 on the frontier of Assam and 11 on the frontier of Bengal—leading from the hills to the plains. This area was economically covetable, for it contained fine cotton and timber lands. After an unsuccessful mission to Bhutan led by Pemberton (1837), Auckland authorised the annexation of the Assam *duars* (1841) on payment of an annual compensation to Bhutan. The Bengal *duars* suffered from the raids of the Bhutanese. An expedition planned by Lord Canning was postponed on account of the outbreak of the 'Sepoy Mutiny' (1857).

2. ASSAM

Political condition of Assam

In the second half of the eighteenth century the region later known as Assam was divided into several political units. The districts of Goalpara and Sylhet, which later became parts of the British province of Assam, were then included in Bengal as a Mughal legacy. On the east of Goalpara, separated from it by the river Manas, lay the Ahom Kingdom, covering the upper valley of the Brahmaputra. On the east of Sylhet lay the principality of Cachar, now a part of the State of Assam. To the east of Cachar lay the principality of Manipur, connected with Upper Burma by two principal mountain routes. There was another principality known as Jaintia, covering the Jaintia hills and the plains lying between those hills and the Barak river.

British relations with Assam

Several European merchants carried on trade between Bengal and the Ahom Kingdom during the years following the battle of Plassey (1757). Geographical accounts of Assam were compiled by Wade and Buchanan Hamilton between 1792 and 1809. During the closing years of the century the Court of Directors took considerable interest in trade with Assam. British political interference in the affairs of the Ahom Kingdom began in 1792.

Cachar was an independent principality as early as the thirteenth century. It suffered from frequent Ahom invasions, and on various occasions it had to recognize the suzerainty of the Ahom Kings. There was British contact with Cachar in 1763 and again in 1793. Raja Krishna Chandra (*circa* 1773-1813) sought British protection, but this was not granted.

The modern history of Manipur begins with the accession of a Naga chief named Pamheiba in 1714. He embraced Hinduism and took the name of Gharib Nawaz. His death, sometime after 1750, was followed by internal wars 'of the most savage and revolting type'. Burmese invasions followed, and a part of Manipur was permanently annexed to Burma. In response to appeals from a ruler of Manipur a British detachment was sent to Manipur *via* Cachar in 1763, but the difficulties of the route prevented it from reaching its destination. In the early years of the nineteenth century a bitter struggle for the throne among several Manipur princes—Madhu Chandra, Chaurjit Singh, Marjit Singh, Gambhir Singh—facilitated the Burmese occupation of Manipur (*circa* 1819).

The Rajas of Jaintia fought against Cachar and the Ahom Kingdom, but they never lost their practical independence. In 1774 a British force overran Jaintia, probably because it had raided the adjacent plains of Sylhet. The First Anglo-Burmese War brought Ram Singh II (1790-1832) of Jaintia under British protection.

Ahom Kingdom

The Ahom Kings had been ruling independently since the thirteenth century. They had repulsed Mughal invasions during the reigns of Shah Jahan and Aurangzib. The warlike spirit of the Ahoms gradually evaporated in the eighteenth century; religious zeal and luxury took the place of military ardour and political vigour. During the reign of Gaurinath Singh (1780-

94), who was weak but tyrannical, political disintegration reached a serious stage.

The administrative organization of the Ahom Kingdom was incompatible with stability and strength. 'The form of government was monarchical and aristocratical'. The monarchy was 'partly hereditary and partly elective'; the aristocracy chose a King from among the nearest relations of the late monarch. The King's powers were severely restricted by the privileges of three hereditary councillors: the *Bar Gohain*, the *Burha Gohain*, the *Barpatra Gohain*. There were two other important ministers—the *Bar Burua* and the *Bar Phukan*—who had to be chosen from four old families. There were six vassal chiefs who enjoyed complete autonomy in their internal administration. There was no regular, well-defined code of laws; but the administration of justice was generally 'speedy, efficient and impartial'. The army was a loosely organized militia composed of foot soldiers (*paiks*). The navy consisted of boats.

'Sectarian animosities' played an important part in the weakening of the Ahom Kingdom. Persecution of the Vaishnavas continued for more than two centuries. A Vaishnava sect, known as *Moamarias*, suffered severe persecution under several Kings. They rose in open rebellion in the reign of Lakshmi Singh (1769-80). One of their leaders seized the throne and issued coins in his own name in 1769. This rising was suppressed, but a fresh rising followed in the reign of Gourinath Singh (1780-94). The Moamaria rising which began in 1785, together with the rebellion of a vassal chief, prepared the ground for British intervention in the Ahom Kingdom.

Expedition of Captain Welsh (1792-94)

As Gourinath Singh was unable to control the developing crisis, he asked for British aid. Some British subjects—mercenaries known as Bengal *Barkandazes*—had joined the rebel chief in Assam. Lord Cornwallis felt that the Government of Bengal could not remain a neutral spectator of the civil war across its eastern frontier; moreover, it had some responsibility for securing the withdrawal of the *Barkandazes* from the scene of their depredations. He sent a contingent of sepoys to Assam under the command of Captain Welsh (1792). Gourinath was restored to power, and a commercial agreement was concluded with him. Owing to his weakness and aversion to business Welsh had at one stage to assume the direct management of the affairs of the State. Such interference was ruled out by Sir

John Shore who succeeded Cornwallis. Welsh left Assam (1794) after a stay of about two years although Gourinath wanted him to continue his work. The official policy of the Government of Bengal was one of cautious and limited interference; but Welsh, unable to resist the pressure of events, sometimes proceeded further than he was authorized to do.

Civil war and Burmese occupation

Gourinath died (1794) within a few months of the departure of Welsh. The condition of the Ahom Kingdom was miserable. *Burha Gohain* Purnananda murdered his rival, the *Bar Barua*, and placed on the throne a mere baby named Kamaleswar Singh, an illegitimate descendant of a former King. The new King remained the nominal ruler till his death in 1811, but Purnananda was the *de facto* head of the Government. He suppressed some insurrections and to some extent restored the prosperity of the country. Kamaleswar was succeeded by his minor brother Chandra Kanta Singh, but Purnananda continued to govern the kingdom. About 1814 the all-powerful minister found a determined rival in *Bar Phukan* Badan Chandra. The latter escaped to Bengal and tried to secure British assistance which was, however, refused. Undaunted, he went to Amarapura, the capital of Burma, and persuaded the Burmese King Bodawpaya to invade the Ahom Kingdom (1817).

The Burmese army occupied Jorhat, the Ahom King's capital, placed Badan Chandra in power, and retired to its own country with a large indemnity. Purnananda had died during the invasion, and his son Ruchinath had fled. Chandra Kanta submitted to Badan Chandra's control, but the latter was soon murdered. Ruchinath returned to Jorhat and assumed the reins of government, but he drove away Chandra Kanta and placed Purandar Singh, a member of the royal family, on the throne (1818). Badan Chandra's friends went to Amarapura and persuaded King Bodawpaya to send another expedition (1819). The Burmese army won a decisive victory, restored Chandra Kanta as nominal King, occupied the country, and committed terrible atrocities on the people. Purandar and Ruchinath fled. There was a change in Burmese policy after the accession of Bagyidaw, who succeeded Bodawpaya (1819) — it was decided to annex Assam to the Burmese Empire. Unable to tolerate the high-handedness of the Burmese generals, Chandra Kanta fled to Bengal (1821). The two exiled Kings—Purandar and Chandra Kanta—made fruitless attempts to oust

the Burmese from their former territory. By 1822 the Burmese victory was complete; the Ahom sovereignty in the Brahmaputra valley came to an end.

Towards these political changes in Assam Lord Minto and Lord Hastings adopted a policy of half-hearted neutrality. Appeals for military assistance from Kamaleswar Singh, Ruchinath and Purandar Singh were ignored; they were not offered support for expelling the Burmese invaders. But at the last stage indirect assistance was given; Kamaleswar and Purandar were allowed to use British territory in Bengal as a base of operations against the Burmese. No importance was attached to the protests of the Burmese or to their demand for the surrender of Chandra Kanta. The Burmese were given causes of offence, but nothing was done to prevent the consolidation of their power in the Brahmaputra valley.

3. FIRST ANGLO-BURMESE WAR (1824-26)

Burmese Empire

Towards the middle of the eighteenth century Burma was united under the rule of Alaungpaya (1753-60) who established a dynasty which lasted till the closing years of the nineteenth century. Bodawpaya (1782-1819) was 'the most powerful monarch who ever ruled in Burma'. During his reign the Burmese conquered Arakan, Manipur and the Ahom Kingdom. The system of government was despotic. Bodawpaya 'was considered by himself and his people' as 'the absolute lord of the lives, properties and personal services of his subjects'.

There was a standing force at the capital (Ava, later Amara-pura) called the 'Invincibles'. The bulk of the army was composed of unorganized levies. Any one from the age of 17 to that of 60 was admitted to the ranks. The King did not provide anything but the arms. Fire arms were used. The soldiers were 'destitute of discipline and all knowledge of tactics', but they were kept in control by threat and punishment. 'If any person turned his back in the day of battle, the whole of his relations, male and female, lost their lives'. Stockades played a very important part in Burmese warfare. The Burmese did not feel the call of the sea, but there were large war-boats for use in rudimentary naval war on the river Irrawaddy.

Arakan

Arakan, a coastal region on the Bay of Bengal, is separated

from Burma by a high mountain range and from the Chittagong district (now in Bangladesh) by the small river Naf. For many centuries it was an independent kingdom, and its cultural relations with Bengal had been intimate. The people of Arakan were known in Bengal as *Mags*. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the *Mags*, frequently aided by Portuguese adventurers, plundered and devastated the coastal districts of Bengal. There were no political relations between Arakan and Burma for several centuries before the Burmese conquest of Arakan in 1784 in Bodawpaya's reign.

The annexation of Arakan to the Burmese Empire made British Bengal a direct neighbour of the latter. The frontier between the two countries was ill-defined and covered by hills and jungles. Many *Mags*, alarmed by the 'shocking cruelty and oppression' of their new Burmese masters, fled into British territory, and the Burmese soldiers sometimes pursued them across the border. Thus arose the problem of Arakan refugees which disturbed Anglo-Burmese relations for about four decades and finally contributed to war in 1824.

British Missions to Burma

Following the murder of some servants of the East India Company at Negrais by the Burmese in 1759, it withdrew its commercial activities from Burma. The Company, however, could not overlook the interests of those English private merchants who traded at Rangoon. In 1786 Cornwallis, who was not prepared to send an official Agent to Ava, sent a 'half official letter' to the Burmese King through one Sorel. Some French attempts to establish themselves in Burma, as also the question of the Arakan refugees, led Sir John Shore to the conclusion that it was necessary to open direct intercourse with Burma. He decided to send a duly authorized envoy to the Burmese Court, and his choice fell upon Captain Michael Symes. Symes visited Amarapura and secured some commercial concessions for the English merchants in Burma (1795). He was followed by Captain Cox (1796-98) who failed to secure any concessions.

At the beginning of Wellesley's Governor-Generalship the question of the Arakan refugees was discussed by Lieutenant Hill in Arakan with the Burmese viceroy of Pegu (1799). To counteract the development of the French influence in Burma Symes was sent on his second mission (1802-3). He was instructed particularly to try to persuade the King's eldest son (who was expected soon to ascend the throne) 'to subsidize perma-

nently a British force'; but he could get nothing more than an empty letter written by four ministers. There was, however, no 'detrimental alliance' between Burma and the French. Bodawpaya refused to be drawn into alliance with either the English or the French.

During the Governor-Generalship of Minto, Canning was sent to Amarapura (1809-10), primarily to discuss questions relating to the British blockade of the French islands (Mauritius and Bourbon). He went to Rangoon again (1811-12). Serious Anglo-Burmese disputes arose in connection with the attempts of a *Mag* leader named Kingbering to drive out the Burmese from Arakan. He used British territory as a base of operations, but Minto did not deal firmly with him.

Lord Hastings inherited the problem of the Arakan refugees and, like his predecessors, refused to surrender them to the Burmese. Kingbering's death (1815) did not restore normal conditions on the Chittagong-Arakan frontier.

Events leading to war

Even before the occupation of Assam Bodawpaya seems to have contemplated the seizure of Chittagong and Dacca which, according to the Burmese, 'anciently formed part of the Kingdom of Arakan'. In 1818 a Burmese demand for the surrender of 'the countries of Chittagong, Dacca, Murshidabad and Kasimbazar' was sent to Lord Hastings. During the years 1814-23 the Burmese established secret contact with the Sikhs and the Marathas.

The final occupation of the Ahom Kingdom (1822) placed the Burmese in an extremely advantageous position in regard to the invasion of Bengal. They could use their boats to advance as far as Dacca within five days of their appearance on the Goalpara frontier. They had to pass through a country intersected by rivers and submerged under water for four months in the year. The north-eastern door to the plains of Bengal was open to them. They indicated their hostile intention by occupying a small island in the Brahmaputra near Goalpara (1822).

On the south-eastern frontier the Burmese provoked the British by occupying the small island of Shahpuri on the Chittagong border. The British recovered the island, but there was no settlement of the Burmese claim that it originally formed part of Arakan.

Meanwhile developments on the Sylhet frontier precipi

tated a crisis. The Burmese King Hsinbyushin (1763-76) had claimed suzerainty over Cachar. The influence of the Burmese had been predominant in Manipur for many years. Marjit Singh ruled there (1812-19) as a vassal of the Burmese King. Then he was driven out, and the principality came completely under Burmese control. Marjit and his two rival brothers, Chaurjit Singh and Gambhir Singh, expelled the ruler of Cachar, Govinda Chandra, from his principality and occupied different parts of his territory. Govinda Chandra took shelter at Sylhet. Recognizing the strategic importance of Cachar in the context of the Burmese occupation of Manipur, Lord Amherst (1823-28), who had succeeded Lord Hastings, converted it into a British protectorate. A treaty was concluded with Govinda Chandra (1824), recognizing him as the protected ruler of Cachar and providing for British intervention in the internal affairs of his principality. A similar treaty was concluded with the ruler of Jaintia, Ram Singh (1824).

Hostilities had already broken out on this front. The Burmese, advancing into Cachar, were defeated by the British forces at Vikrampur (45 miles east of Sylhet) as also at Badarpur (January-February 1824). Amherst formally declared war on 5 March 1824.

Amherst's action was condemned by the British public and sharply criticized by the Court of Directors. The treasury had been 'exhausted by the struggle within the limits of India proper and it seemed sheer madness to court further outlay in adventures in barbarous borderlands'. It was thought that 'the occasional hostilities on the eastern frontier of Bengal' might have been ignored for some time more. But the Burmese were about to invade Bengal simultaneously from three directions—the Brahmaputra valley, Cachar and Arakan. The easy conquest of Assam had strengthened their self-confidence and widened their ambition. Having failed in repeated attempts to conquer Siam, they turned to the west. The new King of Burma, Bagyidaw, was influenced by the audacity of his court and the optimism of his subjects. 'It was not the King who led the people but the people who led the King into war'. Amherst thought that the postponement of hostilities by the British would have been interpreted by them as a sign of weakness and increased their 'insolence and audacity'.

Military operations

The war continued for two years. There were four theatres

of war: Assam, Arakan, the lower valley of the Irrawaddy, and Tenasserim. Gambhir Singh, one of the claimants to the throne of Manipur, played an important part in the military operations in Assam. The Burmese were expelled from Assam by the end of the first year of the war, and by the end of the second year Gambhir Singh expelled them from Manipur with British assistance. In Arakan a British detachment suffered a severe defeat at Ramu (May 1824), but the whole province was occupied by the beginning of the next year. The main British army conducted operations in the lower Irrawaddy valley under the command of Sir Archibald Campbell. Rangoon was occupied 'without having had occasion to discharge a single musket'. After encountering many obstacles, specially geographical and climatic, the British army arrived at Yandabo, a village within four days' march from Amarapura, where hostilities ended and peace was made. Meanwhile the maritime province of Tenasserim (contiguous to Siam) had been conquered.

Burma's defeat was not due to the cowardice of her soldiers. They neither gave nor expected to receive quarter. They were 'the best ditchers and stockaders since the time of the Romans'. They courted defeat largely because their commanders lacked the gift of leadership and not infrequently betrayed signs of cowardice. Bandula, the greatest of the Burmese generals, failed to make good use of the victory at Ramu and hastened the destruction of his army by rash search for spectacular success. The Burmese Government failed to utilise to the fullest extent the man-power at its command.

In spite of these serious handicaps the Burmese were not easily vanquished. The loss to the British in men and money was enormous. The expeditionary force was not adequately equipped with provisions and transport. For this Amherst was responsible. The commanders in the field committed serious technical mistakes.

Treaties of 1826

By the treaty of Yandabo (24 February 1826) the King of Burma 'renounced all claims upon the principality of Assam and its dependencies, and also upon the contiguous petty States of Cachar and Jaintia'. He ceded Arakan and Tenasserim to the Company, recognized Gambhir Singh as ruler of Manipur, and agreed to pay one *crore* of rupees as indemnity. Provision was made for the exchange of 'accredited Ministers' and the conclusion of a commercial treaty. Accordingly, a commercial

treaty was concluded at Amarapura (23 November 1826) by John Crawford.

The treaty of Yandabo placed Assam, Cachar and Jaintia at the disposal of the British Government. The acquisition of Arakan secured the freedom of Chittagong from Burmese interference; but neither Arakan nor Tenasserim were financially profitable. The heavy indemnity pressed hard on the Burmese treasury. The British Resident in Burma wrote in 1837: 'It is well known that nothing but dire necessity forced the late Government of Ava to agree to the treaty of Yandabo, and that it always intended to take the first opportunity of releasing itself from the engagements it had so unwillingly entered into'. The arrangement for the establishment of a British Residency was 'a measure repulsive to all Indo-Chinese nations'.

The commercial treaty provided for free commercial intercourse between the subjects of the two Governments as also for protection to the persons and property of those engaged in trade.

British annexation of Assam

From the territorial point of view the First Anglo-Burmese War had two important results: the annexation of the Ahom Kingdom, Cachar and Jaintia to the British Empire and the establishment of British suzerainty over Manipur; the extension of the British Indian Empire to Burma through the annexation of Arakan and Tenasserim.

At the beginning of the war the British Government declared that it did not contemplate the permanent annexation of any part of the Ahom Kingdom after the expulsion of the Burmese. When British control was established over the Brahmaputra valley Lower Assam was annexed and the easternmost districts were handed over to the tribal chiefs. After a period of uncertainty Purandar Singh was recognized as the feudatory ruler of Upper Assam (1833). Five years later (1838) he was removed on the ground of maladministration, and his territory was annexed. Two frontier regions—Matak and Sadiya—were annexed later (1839, 1842). Thus the whole of Upper Assam came under direct British rule. The foundations of British administration in Assam were laid by David Scott, a civilian sent from Bengal.

After the expulsion of the Burmese from Cachar Govinda Chandra remained the ruler of the principality in accordance with his treaty with the British Government. He was assassi-

nated in 1830. As he left no heir Cachar was annexed to the Company's possessions by Lord William Bentinck. After the death of Ram Singh, who had been recognized by Amherst as the vassal ruler of Jaintia, his territory was annexed (1835). Manipur remained in possession of Gambhir Singh and his successors.

4. SECOND ANGLO-BURMESE WAR (1852)

British Residency in Burma

The British Residency in Burma, established in terms of the treaty of Yandabo, had an unfortunate history. The first Resident, John Crawfurd, who concluded the commercial treaty of 1826, could not stay in Burma for more than ten weeks due to the ill-concealed hostility of the Burmese court. During the next three years no Resident was sent to Burma. The second Resident, Burney, held his office for eight years (1830-38). His experience in Burma convinced him that the Burmese had not reconciled themselves to the cession of two provinces (Arakan and Tenasserim) and would seize any favourable opportunity of recovering them by war.

In 1837 King Bagyidaw was overthrown by his brother, the Prince of Tharrawaddy, who was 'extremely uncertain and fickle ... dissolute and disreputable'. Burney noted that he was definitely hostile to the British; he declared that the treaties of 1826 were not binding upon him, and he collected troops and arms for war for recovery of the lost provinces. The British Government strengthened its garrisons on the Assam, Arakan and Tenasserim frontiers.

Bayfield served as Acting Resident for a few months (1837-38). The Residency of Benson and Mcleod covered a period of less than two years (1838-40). The Residency was withdrawn in 1840. The efforts of successive Residents failed to remove the tension in the relations between the two countries.

Tharrawaddy's military preparations as also frequent rumours about impending war created an atmosphere of mistrust, suspicion and panic. His stormy reign came to an end in 1845; he was succeeded by his eldest son Pagan.

Causes of war

All British subjects trading in Burma were entitled to certain privileges under the treaty of Yandabo (1826) and the commercial treaty of 1826. Despite political tension during

Tharrawaddy's reign no complaint seems to have been submitted to the British Government by any British subject alleging violation of their privileges by the Burmese Government. Several specific complaints from British subjects, as also a general complaint from the European residents of Rangoon about 'the tyranny and gross injustice of the Burmese authorities', were received in 1851. No serious attempt was made by the British authorities to determine the correctness of the complainants' statements. But Dalhousie decided that the British traders were entitled to the protection of their own Government, and sent a naval officer named Lambert to proceed to Rangoon with ships to obtain from the governor of Rangoon 'the reparation' which was due to the British Government for his measures against the British traders. Without a proper enquiry the Governor-General formed a definite conclusion about 'the obvious justice of the (traders') demand and the indefensible character of the (Rangoon) governor's proceedings'. He chose a tactless officer to present the demand to the Burmese governor. He himself admitted later: 'These Commodores are too combustible for negotiations'.

On arrival at Rangoon (November 1851) Lambert opened negotiations with the governor. Certain incidents happened which he interpreted as insults to the British Government. As a demonstration of strength he blockaded 'the rivers of Rangoon, the Bassein, and Salween'; he also seized a ship belonging to the King which was held sacred by the Burmese (January 1852). Dalhousie wrote later: 'There is no doubt that Lambert was the immediate cause of the war by seizing the King's ship, in direct disobedience of his orders from me'. Publicly, however, the Governor-General approved all the acts of Lambert; and his negotiations with the Burmese Government were intended to secure acceptance of his terms by coercion and threat. He made excessive demands, and the tone of his communications to the Burmese Government were couched in severe terms.

Probably Dalhousie wanted to avoid war; but his method of dealing with the crisis could not serve that purpose. Instead of viewing the dispute in a proper perspective he converted it into a test case for demonstrating the majesty of British imperial power in the East. He could not allow Burma to reject any of his demands. 'We cannot afford', he wrote, 'to be shown to the door anywhere in the East'. This was the language of a high priest of imperialism. It was not called for by any threat

of invasion from Burma; what was at stake was nothing more than the interest of a few British merchants.

War and annexation of Pegu

Sporadic hostilities were going on in the early months of 1852. A full-scale military-cum-naval attack, led by General Godwin and Admiral Austen, began in April 1852. Rangoon, Bassein, Martaban, the city of Pegu and Prome fell in course of six months. The Burmese stopped fighting but made no proposal for peace. Dalhousie decided that in view of the existing military and climatic conditions it would be inadvisable to push the British army to Amarapura. He found it profitable to annex the entire province of Pegu. The new province had valuable economic resources, particularly large forests of teak. Moreover, it would form a link between Arakan and Tenasserim; a consolidated territorial unit would ensure British command over the entire sea-coast of Burma and strengthen British control over sea-trade. Upper Burma, enjoying formal independence under its King, would be cut off from the world; its dependence upon the trade and produce of Pegu would bring it under the 'coercive influence (of the British Government) hardly inferior to the influence of arms'.

Dalhousie's plan was carried out; but the King of Burma was not prepared to sign a treaty ceding a part of his territory, and the annexation of Pegu had to be effected through a proclamation (December 1852). Soon afterwards King Pagan was overthrown by his half-brother Mindon (February 1853). The new King had been opposed to the war. He refused to sign away territory but acquiesced in the British occupation of Pegu. An 'unofficial agent' of the British Government, a British merchant named Thomas Spears, served as an intermediary between the two Governments for several years (1853—1861). His unofficial mission paved the way for the re-establishment of the British Residency at the Burmese capital (Mandalay) in 1862. A Burmese mission visited Calcutta in 1854. A 'return mission', led by Phayre, Commissioner of Pegu, went to the Burmese capital in 1855. It confirmed the amicable relations which in practice were already growing up between the two Governments.

BRITISH PARAMOUNTCY IN ACTION

I. SUBSIDIARY ALLIANCE

Lord Hastings

It was during the administration of Lord Hastings (1813-23)—not during that of Lord Wellesley—that the British Empire in India finally became the British Empire of India. The annexation of the Peshwa's territories and the imposition of the Company's suzerainty over Rajasthan and Central India completed the programme of empire-building launched by Wellesley and temporarily interrupted by Lord Minto. At the end of Lord Hastings's administration 'there was no power in the whole of India, from the Himalayas to the Cape Comorin, and from the Sutlej to the Brahmaputra, which could challenge the authority of the British'. His policy resulted 'in the universal establishment of the British influence'.

This influence was exercised through the operation of the system of Subsidiary Alliance. Lord Hastings's object—as he himself stated—was 'to render the British Government paramount in effect, if not declaredly so'. The Princely States were to be held 'as vassals in substance, though not in name'. The British Government was to 'become the acknowledged head of a confederacy'. To it the 'vassals' were required to offer 'subordinate co-operation'. The treaties made with the Maratha princes and the princes of Rajasthan and Central India during the years 1817-23 were based on this ideal of imperial supremacy.

Repudiation of Mughal sovereignty

A corollary to this policy of establishing British paramountcy was the removal of the lingering traces of Mughal sovereignty. Although the puppet Mughal Emperor had been a protégé of the Company since 1803, the British Resident in Delhi observed towards him all the forms of respect 'considered to be due to the Emperors of Hindustan'. The Governor-General was declared on the official seal to be the servant of the Emperor, and he presented *nazars*. Lord Hastings resented such 'servile obeisance'. He encouraged the Nawab of Oudh, in theory a provincial governor of the Mughal Emperor, to assume the royal title. His successor, Lord Amherst, visited the Emperor, Akbar II, without the customary ceremonial and the presenta-

tion of *nazar*. In 1835 the image and inscription of the King of England replaced the name of the Mughal Emperor on the Company's coins.

The 'Sepoy Mutiny' swept away the lingering shadow of the Mughal Empire. The last Emperor, Bahadur Shah II, whose restoration to the throne was proclaimed by the sepoys, was exiled to Rangoon.

Interference in Princely States

Most of the treaties with the Princely States provided for non-interference by the British Government in their internal affairs. This could not be a practical working system. Lord Hastings wrote: 'Instead of working in the character of ambassador, the Resident at a prince's court assumes the functions of a dictator'. Some top-ranking British officers—Metcalf, for instance—claimed that it was 'not merely a right' but also a duty' of the British Government to interfere in the internal affairs of the Princely States, for it had to maintain peace, protect the people from the rulers' oppression, and 'guarantee the rulers against revolution'.

This theory was generally acted upon. There was interference in Alwar as also in Bharatpur during the administration of Lord Amherst. Lord Ellenborough took 'high-handed and unjust action' in respect of the Gwalior State in 1843. He also interfered in the succession to the *gadi* and in the internal administration of the Indore State. Even in the case of the premier State of Hyderabad there was interference in the succession of the Nizams, in the appointment of ministers, in civil administration, in pecuniary transactions connected with the operations of William Palmer and Company, and in military affairs.

In Travancore temporarily, as also in Mysore almost permanently, the British Government took over the administration. In the latter case (1831) there was a provision in the treaty of 1799 empowering the British Government to 'introduce regulations and ordinances' for the purpose of improving the administration. Lord William Bentinck suspended the Maharaja's right to govern his State on the ground of maladministration and put it in the hands British officers. It was restored to him half a century later by Lord Ripon (1881).

In some cases interference took the extreme form of annexation. Bentinck annexed Coorg (1834) on the charge of the ruler's cruelty to his people. He annexed Cachar (1834) because

its chief died without leaving a legitimate successor. He annexed Jaintia (1835) on the plea that its chief promoted human sacrifice. Auckland annexed the Ahom principality of the Brahmaputra valley (1838) because the Raja was accused of maladministration. Ellenborough annexed the Cis-Sutlej principality of Kythal (1843) because the chief died without leaving any male issue.

Maladministration in Princely States

Maladministration in the Princely States was a necessary consequence of the system of Subsidiary Alliance. Formerly rulers who were weak or oppressive were generally overthrown by 'a quiet revolution in the palace or a violent one by rebellion'. But the presence of a British subsidiary force was an effective guarantee for the security of every protected prince, and he was no longer exposed to the danger of loss of his *gadi*. He became indolent and neglected his duties. Sometimes he became 'cruel and avaricious', for 'he had nothing to fear from the hatred of his subjects'. The evils of this system became evident in 'decaying villages, a decreasing population'. Thus, 'hedged in and protected by the British battalions, a mad race of Eastern potentates were suffered to do, or not to do, what they liked'.

Dependence on the British army for military protection, and on the British Resident for guidance in administration, gradually benumbed the initiative and authority of every Indian prince. A Resident at Hyderabad wrote: '... the habit of going upon crutches deprived the Nizam of the use of his own limbs'. For this weakness the Company's 'Most Faithful Ally' lost, not only the substance of independence in internal affairs to which he was entitled under the treaties, but also the valuable province of Berar. He could not clear his dues to the Company for the maintenance of the 'Hyderabad Contingent' which had been formed in order to add to the strength of the subsidiary force. In 1853 Dalhousie forced upon him a treaty which made Berar a part of British territory for the purpose of administration, although his theoretical sovereignty over the province continued to be recognized. This arrangement was made perpetual by another treaty imposed by Lord Curzon in 1902.

Annexation of Oudh (1856)

Oudh was the oldest of the surviving States brought under the system of Subsidiary Alliance, and its cruel impact was found in continuous maladministration under unworthy, profligate

gate and extravagant Nawabs for about eighty years. The people groaned under the heavy taxes imposed by the Nawab as also the illegal exactions of his officials and the Talukdars. The chronic bankruptcy of the treasury was partly due to the heavy charges realized by the British Government for maintenance of the subsidiary troops. In addition, large contributions were realized by Lord Hastings, Lord Amherst and Lord William Bentinck for purposes entirely unconnected with the affairs of Oudh. In 1819 the worthless Nawab was given the title and status of a King.

The Nawabs were bad rulers and bad men, but they were good allies. Periodical warnings were given to them by Residents and Governors-General to improve their administration; but these proved to be useless, for the primary cause of the weakness and corruption prevailing in Oudh lay in its entanglement in the system of Subsidiary Alliance. Bentinck told the Nawab that the management of the State would be taken over by the British Government unless there was an improvement in the administration; but he declined to support the Nawab's minister in introducing reforms. In 1837, during Auckland's administration, a new Nawab signed a treaty, engaging to replace the old levies of the State by a new force commanded by British officers and maintained at his cost. The treaty also provided that if maladministration continued, the British Government would be entitled to take over the management of the State. The 'Home' authorities disallowed this treaty; but this fact was never communicated to the Nawab. Lord Hardinge treated this treaty as valid in 1847 and gave the Nawab two years' time to improve his administration. No improvement was made during this period, but no action was taken against the Nawab.

Lord Dalhousie directed Sleeman, the Resident in Oudh, to make a tour throughout the State and 'ascertain its actual state by personal inspection'. The Resident submitted a report describing the anarchical condition in the State. He was succeeded as Resident in 1854 by Outram who submitted a report supporting that of his predecessor. Dalhousie hesitated to take the extreme step, i.e., annexation; he preferred permanent British administration, with the Nawab retaining his titles and rank. But the Court of Directors ordered annexation and abolition of the throne (1856). Wazid Ali Shah refused to sign a treaty surrendering his rights and was exiled to Calcutta.

It was a political blunder for which the British had to pay a heavy price during the 'Sepoy Mutiny'. The deposition of the Nawab and the introduction of the British system of administration affected the interests of all classes of the people of Oudh. Most of the members of the aristocracy attached to the Nawab's administration, as also the officers and sepoys in the Nawab's army, suffered serious losses as a result of the political change. The powerful Talukdars were seriously affected by the new revenue policy; their traditional rights were ignored, and direct settlement was made with the village proprietors who had so long been their tenants. Moreover, many of their forts were dismantled, and their armed retainers were disarmed and disbanded. The peasants suffered because the assessment was very high. The new system of taxation was oppressive. The new judicial system was costly, and complicated. These were inevitable consequences of the replacement of a medieval system of administration by a modern system. This would have followed even if Dalhousie's advice had been accepted and a titular Nawab had been kept on the throne.

2. 'DOCTRINE OF LAPSE'

Lord Dalhousie (1848-56)

The period of Lord Dalhousie's Governor-Generalship is one of the most memorable epochs of British Indian history. He succeeded Lord Hardinge I when he was only thirty-five years old. He worked so hard that he ruined his health and did not long survive his retirement. He was a very industrious administrator, and, on the whole, he was a ruler of benevolent intentions. But he is remembered mainly as an annexationist. 'No other single Governor-General added even half the extent of territories which were incorporated into the British dominions during his administration'. It was his 'strong and deliberate opinion that the British Government is bound not to put aside or neglect such rightful opportunities of acquiring territory or revenue as may from time to time present themselves'. By war he annexed the Punjab and Pegu (Lower Burma). Some of his annexations were effected without war—by the application of the so-called 'Doctrine of Lapse' and on the flexible ground of misgovernment. His administration practically marks the final stage of British imperial expansion in India. In later years the province of British Baluchistan was formed as a result of

the Second Anglo-Afghan War and the conquest of Upper Burma in 1885 completed the process of the British conquest of Burma. But this extension of the British Indian Empire affected territories lying outside the proper geographical limits of India.

'Doctrine of Lapse'

The 'Doctrine of Lapse' meant that in the absence of natural heirs, dependent Princely States were to lapse to the paramount power, i.e., the Company; they were not to pass like private property to adopted sons. Adoption, sanctioned by the scriptures, was intended to provide for the performance of religious rites and services. The adopted son had a right to succeed to any private property of his deceased adoptive father. But there was a distinction between private property and territorial possession. The succession of an adopted son to the latter was dependent upon the special permission of the British Government, 'the superior sovereignty which maintained by its protection the integrity of the State'.

Dalhousie divided the Princely States into three categories: (1) those which were not tributary to the Company and had never been subordinate to a paramount power; (2) those which were tributary to the Company and had been subordinate to a paramount power like the Mughal Emperor or the Peshwa; (3) those which were 'created or revived' by the British Government. In the case of the first category he held that the British Government had 'no right' to deny the adopted son's claim to succession. In the case of the second category he held that the Company had 'a right to refuse', but it was usually expedient to 'concede'. In the case of the third category he held that 'succession should never be allowed to go by adoption'.

In regard to recognition of the adopted son's right to succession no uniform practice had been followed by the British Government during the years preceding Dalhousie's appointment. Between 1826 and 1848 no less than 15 cases had been recognized, but there were several instances of non-recognition too. In 1834 it was laid down by the Court of Directors that recognition of the adopted son's succession 'should be the exception, not the rule, and should never be granted but as a special mark of favour and approbation'. In 1842 Auckland's Government endorsed the general principle of 'abandoning no just and honourable accession of territory or revenue, while all existing claims and rights are at the same time scrupulously maintained'.

Dalhousie was not the originator of the 'Doctrine of Lapse'. It was an accident that during the period of his administration several important cases arose in which the 'Doctrine' might be applied. He showed too much zeal in enforcing a policy which had been theoretically enunciated on some previous occasions. 'His predecessors had acted on the general principle of avoiding annexation if it could be avoided; he acted on the general principle of annexing if he could do so legitimately'. He did not examine the political expediency of rigorously applying a 'Doctrine' which ran counter to the religious sentiments of the Hindus and the traditions of India.

Lapsed States

Satara was a State created by the British Government out of the territories of the Peshwa after the Third Anglo-Maratha War. Its ruler was a descendant of Shivaji. The treaty of 1819 provided that the Raja's 'sons and heirs and successors' would 'perpetually reign in sovereignty over the territory'. In 1848 the childless Raja died, leaving a son who had been adopted without the previous permission of the British Government. Dalhousie decided that only natural heirs were entitled to succeed. The Court of Directors approved annexation of the State on the ground that 'by the general law and custom of India, a dependent principality, like that of Satara, cannot pass to an adopted heir without the consent of the paramount power'.

Jhansi, originally a principality tributary to the Peshwa, was admitted by the Company to a defensive alliance in 1804. Another treaty (1817) provided that the Raja and his 'heirs and successors' would be hereditary rulers of the principality. The childless Raja died in 1853, having adopted a son without the previous permission of the British Government. Dalhousie declared that the Raja was a 'subahdar' (provincial ruler) under the Peshwa and not a ruling chief. The State was annexed.

The State of Nagpur was forfeited to the British Government in 1817 as a penalty for its attack on the Company. It was granted in 1818 in a truncated form to Raghuji Bhonsle. He died in 1853 without leaving any natural heir or adopted son. In Dalhousie's view Nagpur in its new form was a State created by the British Government. As there was a political vacuum in the absence of a natural or adopted heir, he 'refused to bestow the territory in free gift upon a stranger'; it was annexed.

In each of these cases the propriety of applying the 'Doc-

trine of Lapse' is open to question on historical and legal grounds. What really weighted with Dalhousie was political expediency; he was guided by 'imperial considerations' rather than by any abstract principle of validity or invalidity of succession by adopted heirs. Consolidation of the British territories—essential for administrative and military purposes—was his primary objective. The annexation of Jhansi would facilitate the improvement of the Company's 'general internal administration' in Bundelkhand. Satara, in the hands of an independent sovereign, might form 'an obstacle to safe communication and combined military movement'. It was 'interposed between the two principal military stations in the Presidency of Bombay'. It was also 'placed right across the main lines of communication between Bombay and Madras'. Nagpur was 'placed right across the main lines of communication between Bombay and Calcutta'. Its incorporation in the Company's territories would 'completely surround with British territory' the dominions of the Nizam. A subsidiary factor was Dalhousie's belief that 'the prosperity and happiness of the people would be promoted by their being placed permanently under British rule'.

Sambalpur, which was surrounded by British territory, was annexed, the ruler having died without any natural or adopted heir. In the case of Karauli, Dalhousie's recommendation for annexation was over-ruled by the Court of Directors. The petty principalities of Baghat and Udaipur (to be distinguished from Udaipur or Mewar in Rajasthan) were annexed by Dalhousie due to the failure of heirs; after the 'Sepoy Mutiny', however, Princely rule was restored.

The inadmissibility of the claim of an adopted son to inherit his adoptive father's political pension was enforced in the case of Nana Saheb, the adopted son of ex-Peshwa Baji Rao II who died in 1851. The titular Nawab of the Carnatic died childless in 1853; his uncle's claim to inherit the Nawabship was rejected on the ground that the treaty of 1801 had created an 'exclusively personal'—not hereditary—status. The titular Maratha Raja of Tanjore died in 1855. He had no son, and his daughter's claim to succeed was rejected on the ground that Hindu law did not recognize the 'succession of a female to Hindu Raj'.

'Sepoy Mutiny'

'Dalhousie's administration saw the climax as well as the end of a new era of annexation'. His plan to abolish the Mughal

imperial title was over-ruled by the Court of Directors; but the involvement of Bahadur Shah II in the 'Sepoy Mutiny' swept it away. Two victims of Dalhousie's policy—Nana Sahib and Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi—played leading roles in the 'Mutiny'. But the 'Doctrine of Lapse' had no impact on the general conduct of the ruling princes and chiefs during the 'Mutiny'. The Begum and son of the deposed Nawab of Oudh sought the restoration of the Nawabi regime through revolt; but the Nizam, silently swallowing the loss of Berar, rendered active assistance to the British Government in 1857. The Sindhia of Gwalior and the Sikh rulers of the Cis-Sutlej States stood staunchly on the British side.

On the whole, the 'Mutiny' revealed to the British Government the dangers inherent in an annexationist policy as also the advantage of co-operation from the princes. The natural consequence of this experience was a basic change in British policy towards the Princely States. The Queen's Proclamation (November 1858) declared for the satisfaction of the princes that all treaties and engagements made with them by the Company would be 'scrupulously maintained'. The Government of India openly repudiated the 'Doctrine of Lapse' and permission to adopt heirs to all princes was granted through Adoption Sanads.

CONSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

I. ACTS OF 1773 AND 1784

Regulating Act (1773)

The intervention of the British Parliament in the Company's affairs in India was called for by a financial crisis in its affairs which was caused by the payment of high rates of dividend to its share-holders. Five Acts were passed in 1767. The Company's territorial acquisitions, hitherto based on rights conferred by Charters granted by the Crown, were, for the first time, recognized by Parliament. The British State asserted the right to control the sovereignty of these acquisitions. Secondly, provision was made for payment into the British Exchequer of a fixed sum for two years. Thus a share of the Company's income was claimed as due to the British Exchequer.

An Act passed in 1769 guaranteed to the Company its territorial revenues for five years, subject to an annual payment to the British Exchequer. As the Company's financial embarrassments reached a critical stage, an Act passed in 1773 authorized the grant of a loan by the British Government on certain conditions. This was followed in the same year by the passing of 'An Act for establishing certain Regulations for the better management of the affairs of the East India Company, as well in India as in Europe'. This is generally known as the 'Regulating Act'. It was moved by the Prime Minister of England, Lord North.

The provisions of the Regulating Act which sought to correct the 'evils having their operation in England' related to the two governing bodies of the Company: the General Court of Proprietors and the Court of Directors. A system of reducing the number of votes in the General Court was introduced for the purpose of making it less chaotic and irresponsible. Its main function was to elect the Directors who formed the principal executive body. The Act provided for the election of Directors for four years, a quarter of the number being annually replaced. They elected a Chairman and a Deputy Chairman from among themselves every year.

Far more important were the provisions of the Regulating Act to correct the 'evils having their operation in India'. These belonged to two categories: executive and judicial administration in Bengal, and creation of a central authority for the three Presidencies (Bengal, Madras, Bombay).

'The whole civil and military government' of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, as also 'the ordering, management and government of the territorial acquisitions and revenues' in these three 'kingdoms', were vested in a Governor-General and a Council consisting of four members. The Governor-General and Council were required 'to pay due obedience to all orders' received from the Court of Directors. The first Governor-General (Warren Hastings, who had been Governor of Bengal since 1772) and the first four members of the Council (John Clavering, George Monson, Richard Barwell and Philip Francis) were named in the Act. They were to hold office for five years. Their successors were to be appointed by the Court of Directors. In case of any difference of opinion the decision of the majority should prevail; in case of equality of votes the Governor-General or, in his absence, the seniormost member of the Council present, should have a casting vote. The Governor-General and Council were empowered to make 'rules, ordinances and regulations' subject to certain conditions.

In the judicial sphere the most important feature of the Regulating Act was the creation of the Supreme Court in Calcutta. It was to be a King's Court, not a Company's Court. It was to consist of a Chief Justice and three (subsequently reduced to two) other Judges appointed by the Crown. It was to have 'full civil, criminal, admiralty and ecclesiastical jurisdiction'.

The Act defined the relation between the Governor-General and the members of his Council, as also between the Governor-General and Council on the one hand, and the Governor and Council of Madras and of Bombay on the other. The latter would not be entitled to 'commence hostilities, or declare or make war, against any Indian princes or powers' without the previous 'consent' of the former. But this condition would not apply in cases of 'imminent necessity' as also in those cases in which 'special orders' had been received by the latter from the Court of Directors. This provision empowered the Governor-General and Council of Bengal to exercise the 'power of superintending and controlling the government and management' of

the other two Presidencies in a limited field. This was the first step towards the establishment of a central authority for the Company's territories in India. Formerly the three Presidencies acted separately and independently, subject to the control and guidance of the Court of Directors.

Regulating Act in operation

The Regulating Act came into operation in 1774. It was partly amended in 1781 and largely replaced by Pitt's India Act in 1784. The system which it established for the 'better management' of the Company's affairs in India led to three conflicts which created serious administrative and political problems. The central figure in all these conflicts was the Governor-General, Warren Hastings, who faced internal and external crises with indomitable courage and unusual ingenuity.

As regards the central authority—the Governor-General and Council—the Act placed the Governor-General on a footing of equality with the members of the Council in respect of voting, giving him a casting vote only in case of an equality of votes. Hastings could not work in harmony with the members of the Council. Himself autocratic in temperament, he expected them to be 'subservient to his views'; but three of them—Francis, Clavering, Monson—launched from the very beginning 'a predetermined, preconcerted system of opposition'. Hastings was generally supported by Barwell, but he was not entitled under the Act to act in opposition to the views of the three members who generally voted against him. The conflict covered questions of internal administration as also the Company's relations with the Mughal Emperor and the Nawab of Oudh. The struggle in the Council did not cease even after the death of Monson (1776) and Clavering (1777); their successors were not fully amenable to Hastings's control. The situation became easier for him after the retirement of Francis (1780) who had been his most determined opponent. It was an anomalous situation, for the Governor-General was sometimes compelled to take responsibility for measures which he did not approve. This anomaly was not removed by Pitt's India Act (1784); but an Act passed in 1786 freed the Governor-General from dependence upon the members of the Council by empowering him to act in special cases in opposition to their views.

Under the Act the Governor-General and Council on the

one hand, and the Supreme Court on the other, were 'independent and rival powers'; but the limits of their respective powers were not defined. From the former's point of view the latter was 'a dreadful clog on the Government'. The Supreme Court enforced English Law which was unsuitable for conditions prevailing in Bengal; it obstructed the exercise of executive discretion which the Company's officials regarded as essential for the conduct of administrative business. The Judges of the Court, on their side, took a comprehensive view of their duties and functions, and in this they were supported by the vague provisions in the Act, as also in the Charter (1774) of the Court, relating to its jurisdiction.

The Supreme Court had jurisdiction over two classes of persons: (1) 'all British subjects residing in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa'; (2) persons who were 'directly or indirectly' in the service of the Company or any British subject. The term 'British subject' was open to different interpretations. Moreover, there were provisions in the Charter which might be interpreted to mean that the Supreme Court had been vested with 'superintendence over the whole administration of justice in Bengal'. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Sir Elijah Impey, took a very wide view of its jurisdiction. The result was open conflict with the Governor-General and Council. The most bitterly contested issue was the Court's jurisdiction over the zamindars which created difficulties in the way of collection of land-revenue. The climax was reached in the Kasijora case (1780) in which the Governor-General and Council resisted the service of the Supreme Court's notice on a zamindar. By an Act passed in 1781 the point of view of the Governor-General and Council was upheld; it was provided that the zamindars would not be subject to the Court's jurisdiction.

The third conflict was the result of investing the Governor-General and Council with inadequate control over the Governor and Council of Madras and of Bombay in respect of war and peace. During the First Anglo-Maratha War the Bombay Government concluded the treaty of Surat (1775) without the authority of the Governor-General and Council in violation of the Act, but the Court of Directors upheld it. The conflict in the case of Madras centred round the Second Anglo-Mysore War. In both cases the Governor-General and Council had to assume heavy military, financial and political responsibilities which required concentration of authority in their hands, but

the absence of full legal powers placed them in a very difficult position. Their authority was substantially strengthened by Pitt's India Act.

Pitt's India Act (1784)

In 1784 Parliament passed 'The East India Company Act' on the motion of the Prime Minister, Younger Pitt. It is generally known as 'Pitt's India Act'. It was intended to serve two principal purposes: (1) 'the better regulation and management' of the Company's affairs in England; (2) 'the better regulation and management of the British possessions in India'.

The Act provided for the appointment by the King of 'Commissioners for the Affairs of India', not exceeding six in number, including two ministers (one of the Principal Secretaries of State and the Chancellor of the Exchequer). Not less than three Commissioners would form a Board for exercising the powers vested in the Commissioners. The Secretary of State, and in his absence the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and in the absence of both of them, the senior of the other Commissioners, was to preside at the Board.

The Board—generally known as the 'Board of Control'—was 'invested with the superintendence and control over all the British territorial possessions in the East Indies' as also over the affairs of the Company. This power did not extend to the Company's commercial transactions or to its power of appointing its servants. In order that the Board might be 'duly informed of all transactions' of the Company it was provided that the Commissioners would have 'access to all papers' of the Company. No 'letters, orders or instructions' were to be sent by the Court of Directors to its servants in India without previously communicating them to the Board. The Board might require the Court's 'letters, orders or instructions' to be amended according to its instructions.

The Court of Directors was empowered to appoint a 'Secret Committee' consisting of not more than three Directors. The Board might send to the Secret Committee 'secret orders and instructions' relating to war or peace in India. In such a case the Secret Committee would 'transmit their orders' to their subordinates in India. The General Court of Proprietors was deprived of its power to revoke or modify resolutions of the Court of Directors which had been approved by the Board.

With regard to India the Act provided that Bengal would have a Governor-General and a Council consisting of three 'Ordinary' members and an 'Extraordinary' member—the Commander-in-Chief of the Company's Forces in India. Madras and Bombay would each have a Governor and a Council of three members including the Commander-in-Chief of the Forces of the Presidency.

The position of the 'Supreme Government' (Bengal) in relation to the 'Subordinate Governments' (Madras and Bombay) was considerably strengthened. The Governor-General and Council were empowered 'to superintend, control and direct' the Subordinate Governments 'in all points as relate to any transactions with the Country Powers, or to war or peace, or to the application of the revenues or forces in time of war'. The Subordinate Governments would be 'bound to obey' all 'orders and directions' issued by the Supreme Government 'except only where' they received contrary directions from the authorities in England. They were debarred from commencing hostilities, or levying war, or negotiating or concluding any treaty without 'express orders' from the Supreme Government or the authorities in England 'except in cases of sudden emergency or imminent danger'.

Double Government

Pitt's India Act introduced a system of 'Double Government' (i.e., Government by the Board of Control and the Court of Directors), which, though modified in details, remained substantially in force until 1858. It was marked by elaborate checks and counter-checks as also a cumbrous and dilatory procedure. The political functions of the Court of Directors were effectively subordinated to the powers of the Board of Control which was a branch of the King's Ministry. James Mill wrote: 'The real, the sole governing power of India is the Board of Control, and it only makes use of the Court of Directors as an instrument, or as a subordinate office, for the management of details, and the preparation of business for the cognizance of the superior power'. This was an anticipation of the point of view which the Company urged in 1858 in its petition to Parliament against the assumption of the Government of India directly by the Crown.

The pattern of relationship between the Board of Control and the Court of Directors was actually determined by Henry

Dundas during the seventeen years (1784-1801) of his tenure as President of the Board. As early as 1787 all powers of the Board were taken over by the President; the other members became superfluous. As the Presidentship of the Board was linked up with Cabinet changes, the office was held by many persons after the retirement of Dundas. Among them Lord Castlereagh, George Canning, Lord Ellenborough (who later became Governor-General) and Sir Charles Wood deserve special mention. The composition of the Board was altered by the Charter Act of 1833.

2. FOUR CHARTER ACTS

Charter Act of 1793

As the Company's political and commercial privileges were due to expire at the end of twenty years from 1773, these were extended for twenty years more by a Charter Act passed by Parliament in 1793. No substantial constitutional change was considered necessary, for Pitt's system had been at work for less than a decade. There was a demand for ending the Company's commercial monopoly; it was not accepted, but provision was made for reserving a small share of the Indian trade for private British merchants. This was the first breach in the Company's two-hundred-year old commercial monopoly.

Charter Act of 1813

The renewal of the Company's Charter in 1813 was preceded by elaborate discussions on the justification of continuation of its commercial monopoly. Napoleon's Continental System had closed the European ports to British trade and created grave difficulties for British merchants. They demanded a new outlet for their commercial activities. In this situation it was not considered expedient to continue the Company's old privilege. By the Charter Act of 1813 the Indian trade was thrown open to all British merchants, but the Company was allowed to retain its monopoly of the trade in tea as also in the trade with China. Separate accounts were to be kept regarding its territorial revenues and commercial transactions.

The Act continued to the Company for a further period of twenty years the possession of the territories and revenues of India 'without prejudice to the undoubted sovereignty of the Crown . . . in and over the same'. The constitutional position

of the Company's territories in India was thus explicitly defined: the sovereignty belonged not to the Company but to the Crown. This declaration was implicit in the principle of English Law that 'the acquisition of sovereignty by the subjects of the Crown is on behalf of the Crown and not in their own right'. No political or administrative change was made in respect of the government of the Company's territories.

Two special provisions of the Act deserve notice. First, missionaries and traders were permitted to enter into India and reside in the Company's principal settlements under certain conditions. Secondly, the Governor-General was empowered to spend not less than a *lakh* of rupees a year out of the Company's surplus net revenue 'on the revival and encouragement of learning'.

Charter Act of 1833

At the time of the renewal of the Company's Charter in 1833 there were two questions to be determined: (1) the continuance or cessation of the Company's monopoly of trade with China; (2) the continuance or cessation of the Company's rule in India. The decisions were based on Whig principles which were then triumphant in England. Macaulay was Secretary to the Board of Control and James Mill, the famous Utilitarian philosopher and historian, held an important post under the Company at the India House. Their influence may be traced in the provisions of the Act.

Under the Act of 1833 the territorial possessions of the Company were continued under its government for another term of twenty years; but these were to be held 'in trust' for the British Crown. This was the logical corollary of the explicit declaration of the sovereignty of the Crown over the Company's possessions in the Act of 1813.

The Company lost its monopoly of the China trade as also of the tea trade. 'The union of the trader and the sovereign' was finally dissolved.

The old title of the Company ('The United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies') was replaced by a shorter title: 'The East India Company'. The constitution of the Board of Control was modified.

The Act of 1833 made very important provisions relating to government and legislation in India. The guiding principle was centralization. The Governor-General of Fort William in

Bengal became the Governor-General of *India*. This change of designation was intended to emphasize the controlling authority and supervisory functions of the Supreme Government.

Financial and legislative authority for the whole of British India was vested in the Governor-General in Council. The Governors in Council of Madras and Bombay lost their independent financial and legislative powers. The revenue from all parts of British India were treated as belonging to a single fund, and expenditure from it could be authorized only by the Governor-General in Council. The Governments of Madras and Bombay had no power of taxation or borrowing. For improvement of the legislative machinery the Governor-General's Council was enlarged by the appointment of an additional member who was usually a legal expert and whose duties were limited to the Council's legislative work. He was 'not to be entitled to sit or vote' in the Council 'except at meetings for making laws and Regulations'. Formally he was the 'Fourth Ordinary Member', but he came to be generally known as 'Law Member'. Provision was made for the appointment of a Law Commission and the codification of laws.

As regards provincial administration, two important steps were taken towards decentralization. The Presidency of Fort William in Bengal was too large in size, and too heterogeneous in population, to be a convenient administrative unit. The Governor-General was to be relieved of his direct administrative responsibility for this unwieldy province. It was to be bifurcated so as to create a new Presidency (Agra); and for the administration of the residual Presidency (Bengal) the Governor-General (who would continue to be its Governor) was empowered to appoint a member of his Council as Deputy Governor.

Apart from the provisions of constitutional importance, one important feature of the Act was the provision for 'free ingress' of the natural-born subjects of the British Crown into India. The restraints imposed on such 'ingress' by the Charter Act of 1813 were practically abolished. Moreover, they were permitted to acquire and hold lands in India.

The system of excluding Indians from all high offices, introduced by Cornwallis, had been sanctioned by the Charter Act of 1793. The Act of 1833 provided that no Indian, or

natural-born subject of the Crown resident in India, should be, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour, or any of them, disqualified for any post in the Company's service.

Charter Act of 1853

The renewal of the Company's rule in India for twenty years in 1833 was obviously an interim arrangement; it continued to be criticized by those who regarded it as an 'anomaly'. But there were difficulties in the way of governing India directly through a Minister of the Crown who knew nothing of India and was likely to be influenced by 'the factious public opinion got up in Parliament'. In 1853 the Whig Government, with Sir Charles Wood as President of the Board of Control, made a compromise. The Act provided that the Indian territories should remain under the government of the Company 'in trust for the Crown until Parliament should otherwise direct'. No definite period was fixed for the continuation of the Company's rule. This arrangement satisfied those who favoured the Company. On the other hand, the independence of the Court of Directors *vis a vis* the President of the Board of Control was weakened by amendment of its constitution, and its power of appointing its servants was taken away—they were henceforth to be recruited through open competitive examination. Those who favoured the substitution of Crown control by government by the Crown regarded this arrangement as a step towards their goal. Wood's real purpose was 'to prepare the way for the entire assumption of all the powers of government by the Ministers of the Crown' in 1873. Dalhousie, who was Governor-General at the time, thought that the Act had passed the sentence of death upon the Company.

The Act introduced important changes in the government and legislative machinery in India. As the appointment of Deputy Governor under the Charter Act of 1833 had not improved the administration of Bengal, provision was made to place the province under a separate Governor or a Lieutenant-Governor. The constitution of Bengal as a completely separate administrative unit was an important step towards a remodelling of the system of provincial government. It released the Governor-General from direct involvement in the details of provincial administration and made it possible for the Government of India to concentrate attention on matters of general impor-

tance. Secondly, provision was made for the creation of a new Presidency or a Lieutenant-Governorship. This was intended to meet the requirements of the Company's expanding territories. Thirdly, the Governor-General's Legislative Council created by the Charter Act of 1833 was expanded.

Four tiers

By the middle of the nineteenth century the structure of British administration in India had taken a shape which retained most of its essential features till the transfer of power in 1947, although the gradual development of self-governing institutions in the post-'Mutiny' period progressively changed its spirit. It was a four-tier structure. At the base stood the machinery of district administration, and at the top of the pyramid stood the 'Home' Government. Between them were placed two intermediate tiers: the Government of India and the Provincial Government. The administrative links between these four tiers were provided not only by statutes but also by rules and conventions.

Subject to the more or less formal control of Parliament and the Cabinet, the two wings of the 'Home' Government—the Board of Control and the Court of Directors—controlled the Company's administration of India. The balance of power lay with the Board, and it held the key to policy-making; but in matters of administrative detail the Court's control over its servants in India was more continuous and effective than that of the Board.

The authority of the 'man on the spot' was represented by the Government of India, i.e., the Governor-General in Council. The Council had five members. The Governor-General was empowered to over-rule it, although occasions for the use of this exceptional power did not arise. It was a top-heavy system, and even a hard-working and power-loving Governor-General like Dalhousie complained that the burden was too heavy for six men. The functions of the Governor-General in Council were exercised through a Secretariat which gradually expanded as a result of increase of business.

Provincial Government

Towards the end of the Company's rule the Provincial Governments belonged to three categories. Two of them—those of Madras and Bombay—enjoyed a privileged position

in several respects even after the loss of their financial and legislative autonomy under the Charter Act of 1833. They retained control of their Civil Service and Army. Each Governor was aided and advised by a Council.

The provisions of the Charter Act of 1833 regarding the bifurcation of the Presidency of Fort William were not given effect in full. The Presidency of Agra under a Governor in Council, created in 1834, was short-lived. An Act passed by Parliament in 1835 provided for the replacement of the Presidency of Agra by a province under a Lieutenant-Governor. Under this provision the 'North-Western Provinces', covering the 'Upper Provinces' of the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal, came into existence in 1836. The 'Lower Provinces' had the Governor-General as Governor, but he empowered a member of his Council to administer them as Deputy Governor. Under the Charter Act of 1853 the 'Lower Provinces' were placed under a Lieutenant-Governor in 1854. The Lieutenant-Governors occupied a lower status than the Governors, and they were directly responsible to the Government of India. They had no Council. The extent of their powers and functions was prescribed by the Government of India.

Under an Act passed by Parliament in 1854 certain territories—the Punjab and Oudh—were placed under the 'immediate authority and management' of the Government of India. These were actually administered by officers known as Chief Commissioners, who were subject to greater Central control than the Lieutenant-Governors and had no Council. The Chief Commissionership of the Punjab was upgraded to Lieutenant-Governorship in 1859. The Central Provinces and Burma were placed under Chief Commissioners in 1861 and 1862 respectively.

Non-Regulation Provinces

The administration of the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal, which at one time extended up to the Jumna, was generally carried on according to the Regulations issued by the Governors-General in Council since 1793. These were too complicated, sophisticated and rigid for application in newly acquired, unsettled and disturbed territories where executive discretion rather than the Rule of Law was considered to be the best instrument of government. These territories—Delhi, Assam, the provinces in Burma, the Sagar and Narmada Territories,

the Punjab—came to be known as Non-Regulation Provinces or regions. In these territories the Regulations were modified or replaced by special laws and rules, and military officers were often appointed to perform civil duties.

District administration

The creation of the office of Collector in 1772 by Warren Hastings was a very important landmark in the history of British administration in India. It implied the recognition of a district, administered by a conventioned servant, as the unit of administration. The system was introduced in all provinces. Stage by stage the Collector was invested with multifarious functions, executive and judicial, and became the 'eyes and ears' of the Provincial Government. Bentinck introduced Commissioners to supervise the district officers, but the district never lost its position as the essential unit of administration. The system of partitioning districts into sub-divisions for convenience of administration began during the closing period of the Company's rule.

The modern system of police administration began under Cornwallis, but a Superintendent of Police for each district in Bengal was not provided for till 1838. As the police remained an integral part of the machinery of general administration, the District Magistrate exercised considerable control over its work.

Every district had its judicial officers administering civil and criminal justice. The District Judge heard civil as also criminal cases. As the personal laws of Hindus and Muslims were enforced in certain civil and criminal cases, Hindu Law Officers (*Pandits*) and Muslim Law officers (*Korani Mollas*) were associated with the European Judges.

Judiciary

A Supreme Court was established in Calcutta in 1774, in Madras in 1800, and in Bombay in 1823. These were King's Courts administering justice according to English Law. Appeals from the Supreme Courts were heard by the King's Privy Council in England. For exercising the judicial functions of the Privy Council a committee known as the Judicial Committee, sitting in London, was constituted by an Act passed by Parliament in 1833.

The Sadar Dewani Adalat and the Sadar Nizamat Adalat, established in 1773 in Calcutta by Warren Hastings, were the Company's highest courts. These heard appeals in civil and criminal cases respectively from the Company's lower courts. The former was originally composed of the Governor-General and members of the Council, not of professional lawyers or Judges. The latter, originally presided over by Reza Khan, was held for some years at Murshidabad. In 1790 it was transferred to Calcutta by Cornwallis and constituted in the same manner as the former.

The duties of the two Sadar Courts were too heavy and too complicated to be discharged satisfactorily by the Governor-General and the members of the Council. Wellesley provided for replacing them by covenanted servants of the Company. As in the case of the three Supreme Courts, so also in that of the two Sadar Courts, appeals were heard by the Privy Council. The two streams of justice—the King's and the Company's—lost their separate identities in 1861.

In Madras a Sadar Adalat, dealing with both civil and criminal business, was established in 1802. In the Bombay Presidency a Sadar Adalat was established at Surat in 1800. In 1827 it was divided into two branches—civil and criminal—and transferred to Bombay.

Law Commission

The Cornwallis Code (1793) incorporated all Regulations enacted for the internal government of British territories in Bengal. But this became quite inadequate as the Company's territories expanded and new legal questions arose. Diverse Regulations were passed by the Governor in Council of Madras and the Governor in Council of Bombay for territories under them. There were many uncertainties in Hindu Law and Muslim Law. The Muslim Law, which was usually applied in criminal cases, was in many respects opposed to modern ideas. There were gaps in respect of the law of evidence, the law of limitation, etc. There was chaos in the law of civil procedure. By the third decade of the nineteenth century codification of laws was urgently needed in the interest of good administration.

A movement for codification of laws was initiated in England by the Utilitarian philosopher Bentham. Among his

disciples in the service of the Company were James Mill and his son, John Stuart Mill, both of whom held high offices in the India Office in London. Bentinck decided to govern according to Benthamite principles. Macaulay, Secretary to the Board of Control, revered Bentham and advocated legal reform with a view to making law more effective and rational. Their influence led to the provision in the Charter Act of 1833 for the constitution of a Law Commission.

The Law Commission was required to 'suggest alterations in the courts of justice and police establishments, form of judicial procedure and laws'. It was composed of not more than five members, and the Law Member of the Governor-General's Council was customarily its President. The First Law Commission, appointed in 1835 by Bentinck, had Macaulay, the first Law Member under the Charter Act of 1833, as its first President. In 1848 the Law Commission virtually ceased to work. The Charter Act of 1853 transferred the Law Commission from Calcutta to London. The Second, Third and Fourth Law Commissions worked in London for many years.

The most important work done by the First Law Commission was the preparation of the Indian Penal Code; it was practically a product of Macaulay's genius and industry. It was revised several times and finally enacted in 1860 by the Governor-General's Legislative Council (constituted under the Charter Act of 1853). The reports of the Second Law Commission, sitting in London, formed the basis of the Code of Civil Procedure (1859) and the Code of Criminal Procedure (1861) passed by the same Council. The work of the Law Commissions marked the victory of English Law in the legal and judicial systems of India.

High Courts

The first phase of codification of laws was followed by the Indian High Courts Act of 1861. It provided for the amalgamation of 'two rival sets of jurisdictions'—the Supreme Courts and the Sadar Courts—and thereby brought unity to the judicial system. High Courts were established in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. These were to exercise such original and appellate jurisdiction as had been exercised by the Supreme Courts and Sadar Courts, as also 'superintendence over all courts subject to their appellate jurisdiction'. This power of 'superintendence'

brought them into close contact with the Local Governments in regard to various matters connected with judicial administration.

4. CIVIL SERVICE

Mercantile stage

The Civil Service served as 'the governing body in India during the entire period of British rule in this country. At the beginning a civil servant of the Company, appointed by the Directors, started his career as an 'Apprentice'. He was required to sign an indenture and a covenant embodying conditions of service. This is the explanation of the term 'covenanted servant'. After seven years' service he became a 'Writer'. 'Apprentices' were not sent out after 1694; henceforth the 'Writers' constituted the lowest grade. They had to learn the method of keeping merchants' accounts. They could expect promotion, stage by stage, to three superior grades: 'Factor', 'Junior Merchant', 'Senior Merchant'. The principle of promotion by seniority was generally followed; it was given legal sanction by the Charter Act of 1793. The emoluments of the Company's servants were inadequate; they compensated themselves by private trade.

Even before the acquisition of the Dewani (1765) the Company had assumed large administrative powers in four districts in Bengal: Twenty-four Parganas, Burdwan, Midnapore, Chittagong. These powers were exercised through its covenanted servants. The assumption of administrative responsibilities provided for them opportunities of earning money by corrupt methods. Private trade was carried on illegally on an extensive scale. After Plassey lavish presents or gifts were obtained by the senior servants from the Nawabs and their officials. They had other sources of income, e.g., shares in the revenues collected by the zamindars. The Supervisors appointed under Verelst's scheme 'monopolised the whole trade of the country'.

Warren Hastings (1772-85)

It was during the administration of Warren Hastings that the first steps were taken towards the separation of the administrative and commercial branches of the Company's service. In 1774 the Court of Directors ordered that 'none of our servants shall hold appointments in those different departments at the same time'.

The reforms introduced by Hastings in the administration of revenue and justice conferred on the covenanted servants large powers, and imposed upon them heavy responsibilities, such as their predecessors had never known. By entrusting the revenue and judicial administration to English officers he created the nucleus of a Civil Service. He tried to improve the integrity and efficiency of the Company's servants by restricting their opportunities for illegal earning. Several laws passed by Parliament, including the Regulating Act and Pitt's India Act, made provisions for the removal of corruption in the Company's service, but these had little practical effect.

Although English officials were introduced into the top levels of the administrative hierarchy, Hastings did not eliminate the Indian element. He believed in working within the general limits of the existing institutions. Under him the system of administration was 'of a mixed nature—European and Asiatic'; the personnel also had the same 'mixed nature'. Realizing that the European officials should acquire some knowledge of the country languages, he treated linguistic proficiency as a factor in official promotion. Financial inducements were offered to those who could translate into these languages old texts on Hindu Law and Muslim Law as also the Company's Regulations.

Cornwallis (1786-93)

The 'mixed' system of administration was seriously affected by the 'changes' introduced by Cornwallis which 'approximated to the institutions existing in England'. He introduced a 'new order of things' which had for its foundation security of property (Permanent Settlement) and the Rule of Law in the administration of justice. This system could not be worked successfully by Indian officials who were familiar only with the institutions of the Mughals. The complete Europeanization of the Civil Service was a necessary corollary to the new concept of government imported by Cornwallis. The Charter Act of 1793 provided that all principal civil offices in India under the rank of member of Council should be reserved for the covenanted service. This meant the total exclusion of Indians—in fact, if not in law—from all such offices, for no Indian could expect to secure nomination from a Director of the Company in London for appointment to the covenanted service.

Cornwallis believed that Indians were unfit by character—too corrupt and inefficient—to hold responsible positions in the public service. He knew that there was much corruption in the covenanted service, on which he had to depend. He tried to make the service attractive by increasing salaries and allowances. He also took steps to end corruption. He did not attach much importance to the covenanted servants' acquisition of linguistic knowledge, nor did he provide for any regular and systematic training for the proper performance of their duties.

Wellesley (1798-1805): Fort William College

Wellesley introduced a new era in the history of the covenanted service. His aim was to create an administrative structure capable of fulfilling adequately the complex needs of the Company's expanding empire. The Company's servants, he observed, could 'no longer be considered as the agents of a commercial concern'; they were, 'in fact, the ministers and officers of a powerful sovereign'. In order to discharge its heavy responsibilities in the changed situation the Civil Service needed 'an inexhaustible supply of useful knowledge, cultivated talents, and well ordered and disciplined morals'.

This new outlook took a practical shape in the establishment of the Fort William College in Calcutta (1800) for the training of new covenanted servants after their arrival in India. Here instruction was to be given in the principles of the Christian religion 'with a view to counteracting the erroneous principles of dangerous tendency' which had been released by the French Revolution. To start with, lectures were confined to four subjects: Oriental languages, Oriental laws and ethics, Government Regulations, European studies. It was to develop as an all-India institution for the training of the civil servants of the three Presidencies.

Wellesley founded the College 'without any previous reference to England'. The Court of Directors ordered its abolition, but sanctioned a modest establishment for the teaching of Indian languages and the Supreme Government's Regulations (1802). The College retained its name, but it became a small seminary for the teaching of languages. It gradually became a virtually useless institution. It was formally abolished in 1854. During its early years, however, 'civil servants were intellectually ex-

posed to India' within its walls, and some eminent administrators of the future—such as Charles Metcalfe, William B. Bayley, William B. Bird, H. T. Prinsep, Holt Mackenzie—attended its classes.

Haileybury College

The East India College at Haileybury owed its foundation (1806) to the idea of the Court of Directors that some provision should be made for the proper education of young men to be employed in the administration of the Company's affairs in India. The curriculum of the College included European studies (Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, classical and general literature, political economy, laws of England) as also Oriental studies (Oriental languages—Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, Hindi, Hindustani, Bengali, Telugu, Marathi—and the history of Asia). Stress was laid on the teaching of religion and morality, the primary purpose being to prevent the infiltration of the ideas of the French Revolution into the minds of the Company's servants. The Charter Act of 1813 provided that the Court of Directors would not be entitled to appoint as a 'Writer' any person unless he had resided at the Haileybury College for two years and produced a certificate from the institution about satisfactory compliance with its rules and regulations.

The Haileybury College was closed in 1858 because of the introduction of the competitive system under the Charter Act of 1853 and the provision made for an improved system of training.

Competition

The Charter Act of 1833 made two provisions relating to the civil service. First, the policy of excluding Indians from it, followed since the days of Cornwallis, was formally repudiated; it was declared that no Indian, or natural-born subject of the Crown resident in India, should be, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, or colour, or any of them, disqualified for any post in the Company's service. There was, however, no practical change, for selection was made by the nomination of the Directors in London which no Indian could expect to secure. Secondly, the policy of combining nomination with examination was adopted, but its implementation was held in abeyance on account of the opposition of the Directors.

The Charter Act of 1853 provided that appointments to the covenanted service would no longer be made on the recommendation of the Directors; candidates for appointment would be selected on the basis of a competitive examination held in London. It was also provided that admission to the service would be open to all natural-born subjects of the Crown, European, Indian, or men of mixed race.

The first competitive examination was held in 1855; but the first Indian member of the Indian Civil Service—Satyendra Nath Tagore, elder brother of the great poet Rabindra Nath Tagore—joined it in 1864. The Indian aspirants faced some serious difficulties: religious restriction on sea voyage; expenses required for the journey and residence in England; difficulties of residence in a foreign country; competition with Englishmen who had 'enjoyed the advantage of the highest training and education' in the English Universities. Up to 1870 Satyendra Nath was the only Indian among 976 members of the Service. In 1871 three Indians—all of them Bengalis—succeeded: Surendra Nath Banerjea (who was dismissed for a technical offence after a brief official career and later became a great nationalist leader), Romesh Chandra Dutta (economic historian, Bengali novelist and President of the Indian National Congress), and Bihari Lal Gupta (who wrote an official note which prepared the ground for the Ilbert Bill).

5. BENTINCK AND DALHOUSIE

Bentinck (1828-35)

Lord William Bentinck served as Governor of Madras in 1803-7. He was censured and recalled by the Court of Directors for his failure to deal satisfactorily with the Vellore Mutiny. He came back to India as Governor-General in 1828 and held this office till 1835. He was the first Governor-General of India under the Charter Act of 1833.

Bentinck's seven years' rule was a 'peaceful interlude' between two periods of war—those of Hastings-Amherst, and Auckland-Elphinstone-Harding-Dalhousie. It was not signalled by any triumph in war or diplomacy. This is probably why Thornton says that he 'did less for the interest of India and for his own reputation than anyone who had occupied his place since the commencement of the nineteenth century, with

the single exception of Sir George Barlow'. On the other hand, Macaulay, who was his colleague in the Council as Law Member, describes him as a benevolent ruler 'who infused into Oriental despotism the spirit of British freedom; who never forgot that the end of government is the welfare of the governed; who abolished cruel rites, who effaced humiliating distinctions; who allowed liberty to the expression of public opinion; whose constant study it was to elevate the moral and intellectual character of the Government committed to his charge'. Some justification for this magniloquent eulogy may be found in the reforms associated with his name.

Being an advanced Whig in politics, Bentinck believed in peace, retrenchment, reform, free competition, free trade, and a limited sphere of State action. He was a disciple of Bentham. While coming to India to assume the office of Governor-General, he declared his intention of ruling India in accordance with the Benthamite principles. He was not required to work alone. He found in India young civil servants soaked in those principles during their training at Haileybury. Many of them, again, brought some of the new spirit which was promoting religious, social and humanitarian movements in England, e.g., the reform of criminal law, the enactment of a liberal Poor Law, the abolition of slavery in the British colonies, the religious ideas of Cardinal Newman, etc. A new school of British officers in India felt that they 'represented a higher civilization and a better religion', and it was their duty to fight against social abuses and provide better education for their subjects. Several aspects of Bentinck's policy reflected their influence. Ellenborough declared later: 'We have a great moral duty to perform in India'.

Administrative reforms of Bentinck

Bentinck had a 'clear vision which enabled him to construct for the first time a really workable, efficient, framework of administration'. He had 'an admirable chief of staff' in Sir Charles Metcalfe 'who supplied local knowledge and some of the driving force behind the reforms'. Succeeding Bentinck as acting Governor-General (1835-36), Metcalfe earned enduring recognition as a liberal administrator by recognizing freedom of the press.

The separation of the Company's political and commercial activities under the Charter Act of 1813, and the heavy expenses

of the wars of Hastings and Amherst, necessitated extensive and severe measures of economy. In this matter Bentinck followed the policy laid down by the Court of Directors. He effected large economies in the civil and military services; an annual surplus replaced an annual deficit. He incurred special odium by muleting the army of the special *batta*, i.e., the war-time allowance which the officers regarded as a permanent addition to their pay. To economy in expenditure were added measures to increase income. A new arrangement about Malwa opium increased the revenue. His success in financial administration strengthened the position of the Court of Directors *vis à vis* the British Cabinet and added force to the Company's claim to retain its territorial possessions during the Parliamentary debate on the renewal of the Charter in 1833.

Bentinck made considerable changes in the judicial system prevailing since the days of Cornwallis. He abolished the Provincial Courts of Appeal which were inefficient and hopelessly in arrears. Their criminal jurisdiction was transferred at first to the Commissioners of Revenue, and then to the Judges who were invested with sessions duties. The magisterial powers of the Judges were transferred to the Collectors. Thus emerged the two offices of District and Sessions Judge and Magistrate-Collector. The latter was placed under the supervisory control of a newly created officer entitled Commissioner of Revenue and Circuit. Secondly, Bentinck increased the powers of the Indian officers of the judicial department who tried civil cases. The principle of appointing more Indians to positions of importance in judicial as also in executive posts emerged from discussions in London relating to the Charter Act of 1833. This deviation from the Cornwallis system of exclusion of Indians was found to be the only practical method of keeping down arrears of work and avoiding a more expensive administration. Indian Deputy Collectors were appointed in 1837, Indian Deputy Magistrates in 1843. Thirdly, Persian as the court language was displaced by the local languages in the lower and English in the higher courts. This seriously affected the employment opportunities of the Muslims of the higher classes who educated themselves in Arabic and Persian and were averse to western education which was welcomed by the Hindus of the higher classes.

In revenue matters the problem of resumption of rent-free (*lakhiraj*) lands in Bengal under Regulation VII of 1822 created

difficulties between the Government and the zamindars. Bentinck's support for the European indigo-planters promoted discontent among the peasantry. His long tour in North India was followed by the launching of the revenue settlement of the North-Western Provinces under R.M. Bird.

Suppression of Thags

The Thags were groups of robbers and murderers who claimed to be followers of the goddess Kali. They formed a powerful confederacy operating in Central and Northern India with the support of many landowners. Their activities were facilitated by the anarchy caused by the Pindari War and the Third Anglo-Maratha War. In 1829 a special department under Colonel Sleeman was appointed to suppress them. Many details about them are recorded in his *Rambles and Recollections* and Colonel Meadows Taylor's *Confessions of a Thug*. After the successful accomplishment of his task Sleeman was entrusted with the suppression of dacoity.

Sati

The prohibition of throwing children into holy water at Saugar Island in Bengal, of female infanticide in Central and Western India, and of widow-burning represented a new humanitarian trend in British policy in India. Since the beginning of its rule the Company had carefully avoided interference with the social and religious customs of its subjects. But now the 'universal law of humanity' was invoked in favour of a determined attack on cruel rites and practices.

As early as the time of Cornwallis, British officers were specially ordered to discourage *Sati* although they were not empowered to prevent it. Wellesley referred the matter to the Judges of the Sadar Nizamat Adalat who held that the purely voluntary immolation of a widow was legal, but it would be illegal if she was less than sixteen years old or pregnant. In 1813 Minto issued a circular stating these restrictions and ordering that no widow was to be immolated without the permission of a Magistrate or Police Officer and except in the presence of the police. These cautious measures served very little useful purpose; in 1818, 800 widows immolated themselves in the Presidency of Bengal. Hastings and Amherst considered the total prohibition of *Sati* by law, but they feared that it might cause disaffection in the sepoy army.

Bentinck took the decisive step; *Sati* was abolished by a Regulation in 1829. He was encouraged by the support of the Judges of the Sadar Nizamat Adalat and the co-operation of enlightened Hindus like Rammohun Roy and Dwarkanath Tagore. There was considerable opposition from the Hindu public, but as a result of the effective enforcement of the Regulation the cruel rite died out within a few years.

Dalhousie (1848-56)

A decade of peace following the First Anglo-Burmese War made it comparatively easy for Bentinck to pursue a policy of reform in different directions. Dalhousie conducted two wars and added extensive territories to the Company's empire; this did not prevent him from carrying out 'great measures of internal improvement'. His success as an annexationist has eclipsed his reputation as an administrator; but it must be admitted that, while his annexations require elaborate justification, his administrative work was a splendid achievement. He was a masterful man of abundant energy, and the amount of work done by him personally in initiating policy and supervising administration excites our wonder. He had two defects. His autocratic temperament made it difficult for him to tolerate criticism and to work smoothly with others. Secondly, 'he worshipped efficiency a little too zealously and sometimes forgot that even inefficient people have sentiments which need consideration'.

The trend towards reform on western lines, which came to the surface in Bentinck's time, was pushed vigorously by Dalhousie. A 'convinced westernizer', he 'believed that the promotion of civilization meant the promotion of western reforms, that western administration and western institutions were as superior to Indian as western arms had proved more potent'. His urge to give India the benefit of western ideas on administration 'imparted a certain arrogance to western benevolence and a certain hardness to the tone of the Government'.

Dalhousie's reforms covered a much wider field than those of Bentinck. 'There was scarcely a branch of administration, from the conserving of forests to the improvement of jails, which did not feel his reforming hand'. Material progress received his close attention. He introduced railways; the first line, connecting Bombay with Thana, was opened in 1853, and a

more important one—between Calcutta and the Raniganj coal area—in 1854. He introduced the electric telegraph. The first telegraph line, connecting Calcutta with Agra, was opened in 1854. He reformed the postal service; a uniform half-anna rate was introduced for all letters, and stamps replaced cash payments. A Public Works Department was set up to take charge of construction of roads and irrigation projects. The Grand Trunk Road from Calcutta to Peshawar and the Ganges Canal were striking achievements.

Dalhousie, like Bentinck, regarded education as an instrument for westernization. He maintained Bethune's school for girls in Calcutta, supported Wood's Educational Despatch (1854), sanctioned the establishment of an engineering college at Roorki, and encouraged the extension of primary education. His interest in social reform is evident in the passing of the Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act (1856).

Provincial administration

No account of Dalhousie's administrative work can be complete without reference to his role in improving provincial administration. He was largely responsible for giving the hitherto neglected province of Bengal a Lieutenant-Governor who could deal effectively with local needs and local problems. Relieved of responsibility for direct administration of this province, the Governor-General could now pay greater attention to problems affecting the whole of India. The conquered province of Pegu (in Burma) was placed under the direct control of the Government of India and administered by a Commissioner. Arakan, Tenasserim and Pegu were united under a Chief Commissioner in 1862. Sir Arthur Phayre, whom Dalhousie placed in charge of Pegu in 1853, became the first Chief Commissioner of the new province. He is one of the makers of modern Burma.

The administration of the Punjab after annexation provides the most striking example of Dalhousie's method. In the older provinces he was fettered by the existing institutions and laws, but in the Punjab he had a free hand. At first the administration of the new province was entrusted to a Board with Henry Lawrence as the head, and his brother John and a Bengal civilian as junior members. In 1851 Henry Lawrence was sent to Rajputana as Agent-General because this 'unmetho-

dical sentimental person irritated Dalhousie's practical mind intensely'; the Board was abolished, and John Lawrence became Chief Commissioner. It was John Lawrence who completed the reorganization of the Punjab with the assistance of officers like Herbert Edwardes, John Nicholson and Richard Temple. 'But they always worked under the eye of their indefatigable master who perhaps deserves, even more than his brilliant subordinates, the credit for the results obtained'. As a Non-Regulation Province the Punjab was governed by laws and administrative practices formulated by the local officials in conformity with local conditions. Direct links were established between the Government and the peasantry. The province not only remained generally unaffected by the 'Sepoy Mutiny' but provided troops for its suppression. The Chief Commissioner-ship was upgraded to Lieutenant-Governorship in 1859 and John Lawrence was appointed to this high office.

6. END OF THE COMPANY

Although the Charter Act of 1853 indicated the possibility of continuation of the Company's regime for an indefinite period, it came to an abrupt end in 1858. This was due to a general impression that the abolition of a powerless but meddlesome intermediate body like the Court of Directors was necessary for prevention of recurrence of disasters like the 'Sepoy Mutiny'. Officially the Company was not blamed for the 'Mutiny'; indeed, it was stated that its abolition did not 'imply any blame or censure upon the administration of India under that corporation'. But the Company was unwilling to die; it presented to Parliament (February 1858) a petition which might be looked upon as the swansong of the greatest corporation in history. Its main argument was that for its lapses—if any—the responsibility lay, not on the Court of Directors, but on the Board of Control, representing the British Government, which had the 'deciding vote' in all Indian affairs. Instead of facing this charge the British Government spoke of 'the inconvenience and injurious character of the existing arrangement', i.e., division of responsibility between the Board of Control and the Court of Directors.

Act of 1858

The Government of India Act, passed by Parliament in

1858, provided that the Company's territories would be vested in the Queen and governed through a Secretary of State who would exercise all powers and functions exercised by the Court of Directors, the Court of Proprietors, and the Board of Control. He was to be advised by a body styled the 'Council of India' composed of 15 members. No expenditure of the revenues of India was to be made 'without the concurrence of a majority of votes at a meeting of the Council'. In most other cases the initiative and final decision lay with the Secretary of State. Some provisions of the Act were applicable to the internal government of India. One of them empowered the Governor-General to function without his Council in a certain contingency. Another guaranteed the continuity of treaties, contracts, etc. made by the Company. The framework of the Government of India remained unchanged. There was no modification of the composition and functions of the Governor-General's Executive and Legislative Councils. But the portfolio system was introduced into the Executive Council, i.e., each member was put in charge of a department of administration.

It has been rightly said that the assumption of the government of India by the Crown was 'rather a formal than a substantial change'. The Charter Acts of 1813 and 1833 had explicitly declared the sovereignty of the Crown over the territories acquired by the Company. The President of the Board of Control, a member of the British Cabinet, had for a long time been the *de facto* supreme authority in Indian administration. In the Company's petition of protest it was pointed out that the British Government, acting through the President of the Board of Control, was 'in the fullest sense accountable for all that has been done, and for all that has been forborne or omitted to be done'. The Company, which had been the minor partner since 1784, was now removed and the major partner—the British Government—acting through the Secretary of State, became the sole ruler.

Queen's Proclamation (1858)

Complementary to the Government of India Act (1858) was the Queen's Proclamation (1 November 1858) which introduced the new regime to the princes and people of India. The continuing force of all treaties made by the Company, already recognized by the Act, was reiterated in the Proclamation. To this

acceptance of an obligation recognized by Parliament was added an extra-legal assurance that there would be no extension of 'our present territorial possessions'. To the common people assurances were given in respect of religious toleration, 'equal and impartial protection of the laws', free and impartial admission to Government service of all British subjects irrespective of race and creed, and due regard for 'the ancient rights, usages and customs of India' in connection with 'the framing and administration of laws'. These generous assurances had no legal force; but the early leaders of the Indian National Congress discovered in the Queen's Proclamation a charter of rights with a political sanctity behind it.

In the Proclamation Lord Canning, who had succeeded Dalhousie as Governor-General in 1856, was named as 'our first Viceroy and Governor-General'. The term 'Viceroy' was a new designation unknown to the Act of 1858; it never received Parliamentary recognition, nor did it add to the legal powers of Lord Canning and his successors. But it made the Governor-General the personal representative of the British monarch and added to his dignity.

CHAPTER 11

IMPACT OF THE WEST

I. ENGLISH EDUCATION

It was through the window of English education that the literature, philosophy and science of Europe entered India and fertilized the Indian mind. For about a century after the establishment of British rule it was not a case of deliberate cultural domination of a subject people by a colonial power. The Company's Government did not officially sponsor English education till 1835, and the systematic and organized initiation of the people into English education began only after the establishment of three Universities in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay in 1857. The spread of English education during the first half of the nineteenth century was due largely to the efforts of Indians as also of Christian missionaries.

Bengal

After Plassey the Indians came into increasing contact with Englishmen in connection with administrative and commercial affairs and tried to acquire some elementary working knowledge in their language. As early as 1731 there was an English school, known as Bellany's Charity School, in Calcutta. There was, however, no regular arrangement for teaching English till the early years of the nineteenth century; it was learnt chiefly through contact with Englishmen or private lessons given by deserters from the army, chaplains and English merchants. Rammohun Roy began to learn English in 1796, but even in 1805 he 'could merely speak it well enough to be understood upon the most common topics of discourse, but could not write it with any degree of correctness'. At that stage of English education there was no appreciation of it as a medium of culture; it was only a medium of ordinary conversation.

There was increasing demand for English education in and around Calcutta during the early years of the nineteenth century. Several schools were established in Calcutta and Chinsurah between the years 1800 and 1814, and in one of them

Dwarkanath Tagore took his first lessons in English. Two notable institutions were founded in Calcutta by some leaders of the Hindu society. The Calcutta School Book Society undertook to prepare and publish good text-books, both in English and in Indian languages, suitable for schools. The Hindu College, established on 20 January 1817, was intended to teach, in addition to Indian languages, the English language, belles-letters, poetry, etc. as also the English system of morals. The students of this College played a crucial role as radical intellectuals. They established new schools. In all these private efforts for the promotion of English education Hindus and private Englishmen—among whom the generous watch-maker, David Hare, was the most prominent—co-operated with enthusiasm and perseverance. The Muslims 'kept themselves entirely aloof', for they were not prepared to receive English education.

No official patronage was available for English education. Warren Hastings took some interest in the promotion of Oriental learning, but the only educational institution which he founded was the Calcutta Madrasa (1781) where provision was made for the teaching of Arabic and Persian, particularly Muslim Law. A decade later Jonathan Duncan founded the Sanskrit College at Benares (1791) where Hindu Law and philosophy were taught. Both these institutions were intended to produce qualified Indian interpreters of Oriental laws who were to assist the European Judges. The Fort William College, founded by Wellesley in 1800, promoted the composition of Bengali prose works. William Carey, a Baptist missionary, who was the head of the Bengali section of the College, wrote several works in Bengali, including a grammar of the language and a Bengali-English dictionary.

Charter Act of 1813

Some prominent Evangelists in England, including Charles Grant, a Director of the Company with previous experience of work in Bengal, and William Wilberforce, the celebrated leader of the Anti-slavery Movement, pleaded strongly for two changes in the Company's policy. First, the Christian missionaries should be allowed to come to India and propagate their faith. Secondly, the Government should accept responsibility for educating the people in English. The two objects were complementary; it was hoped that the acquisition of western knowledge

would attract the Indians to Christianity. The Governor-General, Lord Minto, upheld the Hastings tradition. He advocated 'Government interference' for the 'revival of (ancient) letters' and proposed the establishment of Sanskrit Colleges and Madrasas.

The Charter Act of 1813 responded substantially to the Evangelist demand. The entry of missionaries into India was allowed. The Company was directed to set apart every year at least one *lakh* of rupees to be applied to 'the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India'. This provision for State aid for education introduced a new principle in the system of British administration. Indeed, this famous clause deserves to be remembered as one of the most significant British pronouncements relating to India. But the Company interpreted the Charter as requiring it to patronize the existing institutions of Oriental learning. It failed to develop any new educational policy, and the money sanctioned by the Charter remained unspent for a decade. The policy of keeping the Indians in ignorance had powerful supporters. Lord Hastings spoke of the 'erroneous' idea that 'to spread information among men is to render them less tractable and less submissive to authority'.

The foundation of the Sanskrit College in Calcutta by Lord Amherst in 1823 indicates the continuation of the old policy of encouragement of Oriental learning. In the same year the General Committee of Public Instruction was formed in Calcutta to collect facts relating to the state of education in Bengal and to suggest ways and means for the better instruction of the people. In the same year, again, Rammohun Roy wrote a letter to Amherst, protesting against the establishment of a College to teach Sanskrit and pleading for the promotion of 'a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction embracing Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy, with other useful sciences'. The enlightened section of the Hindus realized that 'the way to progress and power lay through the adoption of a new outlook upon life and the assimilation of a new way of thinking and behaviour'. In England this trend of Hindu thinking found a powerful supporter in James Mill for whom utility was the touch-stone of education. A des-

patch sent by the Court of Directors in 1824, apparently under Mill's influence, stressed the superiority of western education over Oriental learning. Three years later the Court of Directors pointed out that 'the first object of improved education should be to prepare a body of individuals' for employment in the public service. Education was expected 'not only to produce a higher degree of intellectual fitness but also to contribute to raise the moral character of those who partake of its advantages and supply the Government with servants to whose probity it could commit offices of trust'. In 1830 the Court of Directors recommended gradual introduction of English as 'the language of public business in all departments... with a view to give the natives additional motive to the acquisition of the English language'. Thus the question of education was connected with that of employment in Government service. As employment was possible at that time only in clerical and petty official posts, it was supposed later that the Company's educational policy was intended merely to 'produce clerks'.

Meanwhile the English schools, particularly the Hindu College, had been promoting western education as a means of intellectual advancement and fresh thinking on social problems. Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, a half-caste Portuguese, taught in the Hindu College for three years from 1826 and inspired a promising group of pupils 'to think for themselves... to live and die for truth'. Under his guidance they drew radical ideas from Voltaire, Locke, Bacon, Hume and Tom Paine. The education imparted at the Hindu Collège was certainly not intended to serve any narrow utilitarian purpose. It produced brilliant students who played a dominant role in almost all branches of public life in Bengal during the closing decades of the Company's rule.

Orientalists and Anglicists

During the decade following the issue of the despatch of the Court of Directors in 1824 the stage was set for the inauguration of the new policy of sponsoring western education through the medium of the English language. The younger section of the Company's officers supported this policy and came to be known as 'Anglicists'. It was opposed generally by the older section—by distinguished men like H.T. Prinsep—who pleaded for continuation of official patronage for Oriental learning and

came to be known as 'Orientalists'. The controversy between these two groups received a momentum after the arrival of Bentinck as Governor-General. He had a Utilitarian faith in education as an instrument for the improvement of man's character. 'General education', imparted through the medium of English, was his 'panacea for the regeneration of India'.

Encouraged by the known views of the Governor-General, the Anglicists pushed their case with vigour and succeeded in securing the abolition of medical classes in the Calcutta Sanskrit College and the Calcutta Madrasa. They found a powerful leader in Macaulay, the Law Member, who was appointed President of the General Committee of Public Instruction. He argued strongly in favour of English education in his famous Minute dated 2 February 1835. He had no knowledge of Sanskrit, Arabic or Persian, but he did not hesitate to express his contempt for these classical languages of the East. 'A single shelf of a good European library' was, in his opinion, 'worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia'. His firm belief in the 'intrinsic superiority of the western literature' was reinforced by his argument that 'the dialects commonly spoken among the natives of this part of India (Bengal) contain neither literary nor scientific information, and are, moreover, so poor and rude that until they are enriched from some other quarter, it will not be easy to translate any valuable work into them'. The English rulers could not teach their Indian subjects 'false history, false astronomy, false medicine'. Because the Indians could not be educated by means of their classical languages or their mother-tongues, they had to be taught a foreign language, and 'of all foreign tongues the English tongue would be the most useful' for them. The funds allotted for education should, therefore, be spent for 'teaching what is best worth knowing'. He added that 'the natives are desirous to be taught English and are not desirous to be taught Sanskrit or Arabic'. As the resources of the Government were totally inadequate for the education of the vast population of India, it should aim at creating a small English-educated class—'a class who may be interpreters between Englishmen and the millions whom they governed—a class of persons Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect'. This new class was to act as filters of western knowledge to the people at large. This is the 'filtration theory'.

Macaulay's arguments won the day, despite opposition from the Orientalists, because Bentinck himself was an ardent Anglicist. The ground had been prepared by the directives issued by the Court of Directors in 1824, in 1827, and in 1830, and western education was really desired by the enlightened section of the Indian society. Macaulay was not the originator of the system of education which transformed India. The fact that Sanskrit could not be the medium of modern and useful knowledge was forcefully pointed out. Rammohun Roy argued that the pupils in a Sanskrit College 'will acquire what was known two thousand years ago with the addition of vain and empty subtleties since then produced by speculative men'. He did not want them to waste valuable years by learning the niceties of Sanskrit grammar, speculative philosophy of Vedanta, obsolete interpretations of Vedic passages in Mimansa, and the subtleties of Nyaya.

On 7 March 1835 the Governor-General in Council adopted a resolution stating as follows: 'The great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India; and all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone'. It was decided to continue the existing institutions of Oriental learning, but the printing of 'Oriental works' was stopped. The victory of the new policy was marked by the opening of the Calcutta Medical College in June 1835.

The state of elementary education in Bengal in the early years of the nineteenth century is well described in Adam's Report which was compiled during the days of Bentinck and Auckland. Bengali, 'the language of Mussalman as well as of the Hindu population', was the medium of instruction. The schools were held usually in some rooms in private houses. The teachers were poorly paid. The pupils were overwhelmingly Hindu. They generally spent six to seven years in the schools. Reading, writing and elementary arithmetic were the subjects of instruction. The use of printed books was practically unknown. There was no school for female education.

In 1836 'the importance of the cultivation of the vernacular languages was officially recognized, but little was done for the promotion of the education of the masses or for the promotion of vernacular literature. Auckland rejected 'a pro-

posal to provide for improvement of teaching in vernacular schools. Relying on Macaulay's 'filtration theory' he preferred 'to diffuse wider information and better sentiments amongst the upper and middle classes'. Thus education promoted by the State assumed an elitist character. The result was to bifurcate Indian society into two classes—a very small one, raised by English education to a higher social and cultural level, and the overwhelming majority, deprived of English education and living in ignorance and in a state of social depression. This meant 'the setting up of a new caste in this caste-ridden country'.

The privileged few enjoyed increasing opportunities of improving their economic and social status as a result of the Government's employment policy. New offices—those of Deputy Collectors and Deputy Magistrates, for instance—were thrown open to Indians. In 1837 English replaced Persian as the language of administration. Hardinge adopted the policy of giving preference in Government service to persons who had English education (1844). This served as a powerful incentive to the spread of English education. The number of schools under the control of the Council of Education, which had replaced the General Committee of Public Instruction in 1842-43, rose from 28 in 1843 to 151 in 1855.

Christian missionaries

The Christian missionaries played a very important role in the spread of English education. They opened schools and colleges in the hope that the light of Western knowledge would attract the Indians to Christianity. The most important among these institutions were the Baptist Mission College at Serampore (1818), the Bishop's College in Calcutta (1820), and the General Assembly's Institution in Calcutta, established by Alexander Duff (1830). The missionaries had little success in spreading their faith, but their educational efforts were welcomed by the people. Referring to Bengali boys eager to learn English Duff wrote: 'They pursued us along the streets; they threw open the doors of our palankeens; they poured in their supplications with a pitiful earnestness of countenance which might have softened a heart of stone'.

Educational Despatch of 1854

In 1845 the Council of Education in Calcutta drew up a plan for a University in the metropolitan city, but it had no immediate effect. Dalhousie desired to establish vernacular schools 'throughout the whole of India with a view to convey instruction to the mass of the people'. He also proposed to place the higher education of the people, specially in Calcutta, 'on a footing adequate to the wants of the community, and worthy of the Government of the Company'.

In July 1854 Sir Charles Wood, President of the Board of Control, issued a despatch on education which imposed upon the Company the duty of 'creating a properly articulated system of education from the primary school to the University'. Stress was laid on 'the improvement and far wider extension of education, both English and vernacular'. The importance attached to vernacular education was an implied repudiation of the 'filtration theory'—the idea that education would filter downwards from the English educated classes to the masses—which had been followed since 1835. It was stated: 'English is to be taught wherever there is a demand for it, but it is not to be substituted for the vernacular languages of the country'. English, however, was to remain the medium of instruction for higher education.

The principal recommendations were: (1) the constitution of a separate department of the administration for education; (2) the establishment of Universities at the Presidency towns; (3) the establishment of institutions for training teachers for all classes of schools; (4) the maintenance of the existing Government Colleges and high schools and the increase of their number when necessary; (5) the establishment of new middle schools; (6) increased attention to vernacular schools; (7) the introduction of a system of grants-in-aid from public funds to private educational institutions.

The establishment of Education Departments began immediately. Three Universities were founded in 1857: Calcutta, 24 January; Bombay, 18 July; Madras, 5 September. These were examining and degree-giving institutions, modelled on the University of London; actual teaching was left to 'affiliated institutions'. Their general object was to 'encourage a regular and liberal course of education'.

Bombay

'There was some progress in the spread of English education in Bombay and Madras before 1854, due mainly to State efforts, though it did not compare favourably with what had been achieved in this respect in Bengal by that time'. The Bombay Native Education Society, founded in 1815, opened three schools. Mountstuart Elphinstone, who became Governor of Bombay after the annexation of the Peshwa's territories, was a believer in the Benthamite idea of mass education. He favoured the diffusion of Western knowledge through the vernaculars. Sir John Malcolm, his successor as Governor, followed him in this respect. As late as 1848 the Government of Bombay had decided preference for the use of vernaculars. 'While the vernacular education was languishing in Bengal, in Bombay it was making rapid progress'.

By 1850 there were only eight English schools subordinate to the Board of Education (which was the developed form of the Bombay Native Education Society) throughout the Bombay Presidency. The Christian missionaries established several schools; they were specially interested in female education. Engineering education had its beginning in 1824. The Grant Medical College was opened in 1845.

Madras

In the Madras Presidency the Christian missionaries were the pioneers in the field of English education. As early as 1787 the Court of Directors provided financial assistance for missionary schools. Sir Thomas Munro, as Governor, seriously took up the question of education. He believed that popular ignorance could be removed by the establishment of endowment schools throughout the country by the Government. In 1854 the Court of Directors noted that very little had been done by the Government of Madras for the education of the masses, and it was only the activities of the Christian missionaries that had been successful in the Tamil-speaking areas.

The Madras Christian College was founded in 1837, the Presidency College in 1853, and the Medical College in 1851.

Uttar Pradesh

The first English-medium College in Uttar Pradesh was founded at Agra in 1823. In 1840 there were three Colleges and

nine Anglo-Vernacular schools maintained by the Government. Thomason, as Lieutenant-Governor of the province, took up the idea of vernacular education in 1843. As compared with Bengal, there were less demand and less encouragement for English education.

Engineering education had its beginning at Saharanpur in 1847. The Engineering College at Roorkee was placed on a permanent footing in 1849 and named after Thomason in 1854.

2. EARLY MODERNISERS

Modernisation

The term 'modernisation' indicates the introduction of progressive and dynamic ideas of the West in the medieval—and more or less static—society of an Oriental country. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there was a great ferment of new ideas in Europe as a result of advancement of scientific and philosophical studies. New attitudes of mind, morals and manners emerged from the intellectual revolution of the eighteenth century. The French Revolution generated new political ideas. The Industrial Revolution promoted new economic relations.

The new age in Europe was characterised by three dominant ideas. The first was rationalism, i.e., the supremacy of reason over faith; its essence was that nothing was true unless it was in conformity with human reason and could be tested in practice. It meant repudiation of any fixed set of religious ideas, social conventions and political practices. The second was humanism which implied the dignity of the individual irrespective of birth and economic status. It was a protest against social, economic and political systems which treated some groups of human beings as mere agents for the happiness of other groups. The third was the confidence in the capacity of man to progress. It implied that man could create a dynamic society on rational and humanitarian lines.

These powerful ideas began to flow into India from the early years of the nineteenth century primarily through English education. Bengal was the pioneer in welcoming them. It was in Bengal that English education found its first firm foothold. It was Bengal which produced Rammohun Roy, who was the central figure in India's new awakening. Sir Jadunath Sarkar says:

'If Periclean Athens was the school of Hellas, the eye of Greece, mother of arts and eloquence, that was Bengal to the rest of India under British rule, but with a borrowed light which it had made its own with marvellous cunning. In this new Bengal originated every good and great thing of the modern world that passed on to the other provinces of India. From Bengal went forth the English-educated teachers and the English-inspired thought that helped to modernise Bihar and Orissa, Hindustan and Deccan. New literary types, reform of the language, social reconstruction, political aspirations, religious movements and even changes in manners that originated in Bengal, passed like ripples from a central eddy, across provincial barriers, to the furthest corners of India'.

Modernisation was stimulated by the activities of the Christian missionaries, as also by the policy of the Government from the days of Bentinck onwards; but it was from indigenous forces that it received a continuous momentum. Far-sighted leaders determined its nature and guided its course.

Rammohun Roy (1774-1833)

In the opinion of Rabindranath Tagore, 'Rammohun Roy inaugurated the Modern Age in India... He is the great path-maker who had removed ponderous obstacles that impeded our progress at every step....'.

Rammohun was born in 1774 (or 1772) in an orthodox and wealthy Brahmin family in a village not very far from Calcutta. He studied Persian and Arabic at Patna and Sanskrit at Benares. Close contact with Muslim religious thought, including Sufi ideas, raised in his mind doubts about the value of idolatry. When he was about thirty years of age he wrote a Persian work entitled *Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhadin* ('A Gift to Monotheists'). It was a 'protest against the idolatries and superstitions of all creeds' and an attempt 'to lay a common foundation of Universal Religion in the doctrine of the Unity of the Godhead'.

During the years 1805-14 Rammohun was in close touch with John Digby, a covenanted servant of the Company. He was in the Company's service under this officer for short terms, and after the termination of service he remained in his private employment at Rangpur (now in Bangladesh). Here he acquired proficiency in English and began to take a keen interest in European politics—specially in the course of the French Revolu-

tion. Here, again, he studied the Tantras as also the sacred books of Jainism, and held discussion-meetings with representative men of various sects, such as Hindus, Muslims and Jains.

Rammohun as religious reformer

From Rangpur Rammohun came to Calcutta and settled there (1814 or 1815). Here he came into wider contact with men whose minds were rationalized by English education as also with Christian missionaries. In 1815 he founded an association called *Atmiya Sabha* which held weekly meetings for propagating the monotheistic ideas of the Hindu scriptures. In 1819 he vanquished an eminent South Indian scholar in a debate on idol-worship. His crusade against idoātry, carried through discussions and pamphlets, alienated his friends and relatives. Undaunted, he published *The Precepts of Jesus* (1820) which explained the moral and spiritual precepts of Christ without describing the miracles. It provoked hostile criticism from the Baptist missionaries of Serampore and raised a controversy on the doctrine of Trinity. In three *Appeals to the Christian Public*, which revealed Rammohun's profound Biblical learning, he upheld the doctrine of the Unity of the Godhead.

In 1825 Rammohun established the Vedanta College for teaching the monotheistic doctrine of Vedanta. His purpose was to 'lead his countrymen into pure and elevated theism'. Considering it necessary to provide a place for the unsectarian worship of One God he established the *Brahmo Samaj* on 20 August 1828. Weekly meetings were held, the Vedas were recited, the Upanishads were read and translated into Bengali, and sermons were preached or read. There was serious opposition from the orthodox Hindu community, and a rival organization, called *Dharma Sabha*, was founded under the leadership of Radhakanta Deb, a very prominent zamindar who was the chief spokesman of orthodox Hindus. The two associations propagated their conflicting views through two daily papers, the *Sambada-Kaumudi* and the *Samachara-Chandrika*.

On 23 January 1830 Rammohun opened his church. It could be used by any one for 'the worship and adoration of the one Eternal Unsearchable and Immutable Being who is the Author and Preserver of the Universe, but not under or by any other name, designation or title'; no image or picture was to be admitted. The church was not to be treated by any sect as

its special property; it was to be 'a meeting ground of all sects for the worship of One True God'.

Rammohun's purpose was to revive monotheism based on the Vedanta, not to found a new sect. He was a reformed Hindu: he used to wear the sacred thread till his death. Sivanath Sastri, an eminent Brahmo leader of later times, says that 'his work was mainly negative and reformatory', for he called his countrymen to discard idolatry and worship One True God. While defending Hinduism against the ignorant and prejudiced attacks of the missionaries, he sought to purify and rationalize it, and he used ancient scriptures to explain and justify his interpretation of his ancestral faith.

Rammohun as educational reformer

Rammohun looked upon English education as a major instrument for modernisation of India. He himself acquired high proficiency in English. To what extent he was associated with the foundation of the Hindu College is a matter of controversy; but he maintained at his own cost an English school in Calcutta and co-operated with David Hare in his educational projects. In his school, as also in the Vedanta College established by him, courses on Western social and physical sciences were offered. In his historic letter to Lord Amherst (1823) he pleaded eloquently for Government patronage for 'a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction embracing Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy, with other useful sciences'.

Rammohun as a social reformer

Rammohun was aware of the evils of the caste system which, he wrote, 'entirely deprived the Hindus of political feeling'. But his active interest in social reform related to matters affecting Hindu women. He persistently worked for many years for the abolition of *Sati*. He roused public opinion on the question by submitting petitions to the Government, by writing tracts in Bengali, and by carrying on a vigorous campaign through his journal *Sambada-Kaumudi*. As a result of the opposition which he provoked among orthodox Hindus, 'for a time his life was in danger'. But he advised Bentinck against legislation to abolish *Sati*, for he had a 'constitutional aversion to coercion' and believed that the object might be achieved by persuasion and carefully planned administrative measures.

Rammohun argued that women should be given the right of inheritance and property so that their social status might be improved.

Rammohun's economic ideas

Rammohun advocated modification of the Permanent Settlement in the interest of the peasantry. He pleaded that the Government should 'fix a maximum rent to be paid by each of the cultivators, so that their rents, already raised to a ruinous extent, might not be subject to further increase'. For the benefit of the zamindars he protested against the official policy of imposing rent on rent-free lands.

Rammohun believed that 'educated persons of character and capital (Europeans) should be permitted and encouraged to settle in India'. They would 'introduce the knowledge they possess of superior modes of cultivating soil (in sugar, for example), as has already happened with respect to indigo, and improvements in the mechanical arts, and in the agricultural and commercial systems generally'. The knowledge, capital and enterprise of the European immigrants, he hoped, would contribute to modernisation of India's economy in different sectors.

Rammohun's political ideas

Modern India had her first political thinker in Rammohun Roy. He was the first Indian to appreciate and assimilate European political thought and—what was more important—to consider the problem of its applicability to Indian conditions in his times. Although well acquainted with the writings of Rousseau and Thomas Paine, he did not base his political ideas on the doctrine of Natural Rights; he was not influenced by *a priori* theories. He found his political guides in Montesquieu, from whom he took lessons on the Separation of Powers, and in Blackstone, who provided lessons on constitutional government. In regard to codification of laws and social reform he was influenced by Bentham.

In an age of revolution in Europe Rammohun preferred constitutional monarchy. But he recognized man's right to 'oppose any system, religious, domestic or political, which is enemical to the happiness of society, or calculated to debase the human intellect'. As regards India, he was not in favour of transferring the government from the Company to the British

Crown. Such transfer would, he believed, mean 'a change from a limited government, presenting a variety of efficient checks on any abuse of its power, for an absolute despotism'.

Rammohun thought that the legislative authority in India would be dominated by the executive authority if the Governor-General in Council exercised the power of making laws. He did not ask for direct Indian participation in legislation; but he proposed certain methods by which the legislative process could be put in contact with the Indian community at large so as to ensure that laws would be responsive to its wishes and needs as far as possible. One of these methods was the maintenance of a free press which might serve as a channel of expression of public opinion on legislative proposals. He was a pioneer in the field of journalism. He brought out journals in Bengali, Persian, Hindi and English and used them for the purpose of spreading scientific, literary and political knowledge among the people. Unless the press was free, he thought, it could not educate public opinion and represent the people's grievances and demands before the Government. As the press in India was subject to legal restrictions, Rammohun and others submitted a petition to the Supreme Court pleading for its freedom. This petition has been put in the same class as the *Areopagitica* of Milton.

Rammohun pleaded for the codification of criminal and civil laws. He advocated reform of the judicial system and proposed introduction of trial by jury. He demanded that Indians should be made eligible for 'situations of trust and responsibility in the State'.

The most refreshing feature of Rammohun's interest in political issues is its universalism which was an entirely new factor in the India of his age. He grieved over the overthrow of constitutional government in Naples in 1821. He gave a public dinner at the Calcutta Town Hall when the revolutionary movement achieved success in Spanish America (1823). He 'publicly avowed' that if the British Parliament rejected the Reform Bill of 1832 he would 'renounce' his 'connection' with that country (England). He rejoiced over the success of the July Revolution (1830) in France. He hoped that the victory of liberty in Europe would benefit 'Asiatic nations, especially those that are European colonies'.

Rammohun took a broad view of world problems. As the poet Tagore says: 'He knew that the ideal of human civilisation does not lie in the isolation of independence, but in the brotherhood of interdependence of individuals as well as nations in all spheres of thought and activity'. He was not only the 'Father and Patriarch of modern India' but also the 'Universal Man'.

Dwarkanath Tagore (1794-1846)

Dwarkanath Tagore, a close associate of Rammohun Roy and grandfather of the poet Rabindranath Tagore, was born in 1794 in the rich Tagore family of Calcutta. Educated in Persian, Arabic and English, he inherited his ancestral zamindari at an early age and enlarged it considerably through good management and judicious investment. He mastered the intricacies of the laws relating to land tenures, administration of justice, etc., and earned large sums of money by acting as legal adviser to prominent zamindars. He was also in the Company's service for several years. He played a crucial role in the economic history of his times as an entrepreneur. He was engaged in export trade, banking and industrial projects. He secured the collaboration of private British merchants, and established the Union Bank and the firm of Carr, Tagore & Co. as their partner. He was not merely a fortune-hunter but also a nation-builder; he 'visualised an India industrialized and modernized' and believed that this aim could be achieved in partnership with private British enterprise. He died prematurely in 1846. His commercial empire collapsed soon afterwards, and the example set by him was not followed.

Though born in an orthodox Brahmin family, he 'dreamt of his country's rebirth as a modern nation'. This was his link with Rammohun Roy. He did not share Rammohun's radical religious view and never formally repudiated the family tradition; but he mixed freely with Europeans and ignored the established social conventions. He actively supported Rammohun's crusade for social reform (including abolition of *Sati*), religious tolerance and intellectual freedom. He fully shared Rammohun's enthusiasm for the spread of English education. He was an enthusiastic patron of the rising Indian press. He paid two visits to England, mixed freely in the highest social circles, and earned the sobriquet 'Prince Dwarkanath'.

Dwarkanath organized lectures on political subjects such as 'patriotism', and political and administrative matters were discussed in his journal entitled *Reformer*. Like Rammohun, he advocated appointment of Indians to responsible posts and improvement of administration of justice. He regretted the loss of political rights under British rule. He said in 1836: 'They have taken all that the natives possessed; their lives, liberty, property and all were held at the mercy of Government'. But he believed that 'the happiness of India is best secured by her connection' with England.

'Young Bengal'

After Rammohun Roy's departure for England (where he died in 1833) towards the end of 1830 political ideas in Bengal began to flow into two different channels. During the next three decades the tradition initiated by him—a realistic approach to political and administrative issues—was continued by Dwarkanath Tagore, Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Devendranath Tagore, Ramgopal Ghosh, Pearychand Mitra, Kishorichand Mitra, Girishchandra Ghosh and Harishchandra Mukherjee. Devendranath and Harishchandra accepted Rammohun's religious ideas; the others remained within the fold of unreformed Hinduism. Girishchandra was the founder and first editor of the *Hindoo Patriot* and the *Bengalee*. Harishchandra edited the *Hindoo Patriot* and came to be known as the 'friend of the ryots' for his firm support of the struggle against the European indigo-planters.

Rammohun's followers were generally moderates; though they were sharp critics of many Governmental measures, they had faith in the beneficial character of British rule. There was another group, usually known as 'Young Bengal', consisting of young students of the Hindu College who took a radical view of social, religious and political problems. They were also known as 'Derozians' because their friend, philosopher and guide was Henry Vivian Derozio who was a teacher in the Hindu College from 1828 to 1831. The central point in his teaching was the search for truth in defiance of authority. He was a patriot. In a well-known poem in English—which was an anticipation of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Bande Mataram*—he contrasted India's degradation under foreign rule with her ancient glory. His influence on his young pupils was extraordinary. After his premature death (1831) they continued to propagate radical

ideas through associations and journals. They generally took greater interest in theoretical discussions than in concrete problems. They drew their political inspiration from Bacon, Hume and Thomas Paine. Among the leading members of the group were Rasik Krishna Mullick, Tarachand Chakravarti and Kashi-prasad Ghosh. Akshay Kumar Dutta was neither a student of the Hindu College nor a member of the 'Young Bengal' group. He was a 'philosophical radical'. Drawing his inspiration from European philosophy, he combined political idealism with an acute sense of the failure of the British rulers to fulfil the natural obligations of a Government to its subjects.

Political associations

The first political organization in Calcutta was the 'Zamin-dary Association' established in 1838. It was 'intended to embrace people of all descriptions, without reference to caste, country or complexion'. Soon after its establishment its name was changed to 'Landholders' Society'. At the initial stage Dwarkanath Tagore was its principal leader. It stood primarily for the defence of the landholders' interests, but it claimed that these were intimately bound up with the interests of the ryots. It aimed at setting up branch societies 'in every district of the British Indian Empire'; political activities were thus to be placed on an all-India basis. The Society had little practical success, but 'it gave to the people the first lesson in the art of fighting constitutionally for their rights and taught them manfully to assert their claims and give expression to their opinions'.

In 1842 George Thompson, a British philanthropist, came to Calcutta with Dwarkanath Tagore who was returning from his first visit to England. Thompson had already established in London an association called the 'British India Society' (1839) in collaboration with William Adam, a friend of Rammohun Roy. On arrival in Calcutta he created a new enthusiasm among the educated public by his political lectures. He took the initiative in establishing a new political association called the 'Bengal British India Society' (1843). It was 'composed of the upper middle class men sympathising strongly with the condition of the ryots'. It was controlled by persons associated with the Rammohun tradition and the 'Young Bengal' group such as Ramgopal Ghosh, Pearychand Mitra and Tarachand Chakravarty. But leaders of the orthodox Hindu society, such as

Radhakanta Deb, and landholders like Dwarkanath Tagore took no part in its organization.

The Landholders' Society and the Bengal British India Society had European members. But the agitation over the question of the European British subjects' privileges in criminal trials created a racial cleavage, and the 'British Indian Association'—a political association composed of Indians only—was established in 1851. It was an aristocratic body with a conservative outlook. It was dominated by the zamindars; Radhakanta Deb was its first President, Devendranath Tagore (son of Dwarkanath Tagore) its first Secretary. Under the editorship of Harishchandra Mukherjee the *Hindoo Patriot* practically became its official organ. It had an all-India outlook. 'Associations of a similar character' were formed at Poona, Madras and Bombay.

The first important step taken by the British Indian Association was to submit a memorial to Parliament on the revision of the Company's Charter in 1853. The most important demand was the constitution of a Legislative Council with some Indian members. Even after the passing of the Charter Act (1853) the Association continued to advocate the inclusion of Indians in the Legislative Council, the holding of the Civil Service examination in India, the abolition of the privileges of the European British subjects in criminal trials, etc.

Vidyasagar (1820-91)

Iswarchandra Bandyopadhyaya, known to his contemporaries as also to later generations as 'Vidyasagar' ('Ocean of Learning'), was the greatest social and educational reformer of the second half of the nineteenth century. Born in 1820 in a very poor and orthodox Brahmin family, he struggled hard to educate himself, distinguished himself as a pupil in the Calcutta Sanskrit College, and rose to the high position of the Principal of the College in 1851. He had few rivals as a Sanskrit scholar; but despite his close association with an orthodox environment he appreciated the value of English education, acquired high proficiency in English, and tried to promote public interest in it in different ways. He represented an unusual blend of Indian and European cultures. Simple in dress and habits, fearless and straightforward in his dealings with others, he dominated society by moral force. His humanism expressed itself in spontaneous sympathy for the poor, the oppressed, the unfortunate,

and the victim of social abuses. He is still remembered as the 'Ocean of Kindness'. He did not hesitate to resign from Government service as a protest against undue official interference in his work, declaring that he would earn his living by selling potatoes. With such firmness was combined his emotional worship of his mother, his tears for Hindu widows, and his anxiety to relieve distress wherever he found it.

Vidyasagar contributed to the making of modern India through social and educational reforms. Sympathy for down-trodden womanhood is the key to the social reforms advocated by him. His long struggle in favour of widow remarriage led to its legalisation in 1856 (The Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act). He proved by his scholarly writings that the remarriage of widows had scriptural sanction, but the Hindu society was almost unanimously against him. While 987 persons submitted a petition to the Government of India in favour of his view, a counter-petition with 36,763 signatures was submitted to frustrate his effort. He spent large sums of money to promote his cause; but the Hindu society refused to reform itself and only 25 widow remarriages were performed in five years following the passing of the Act. He suffered social ostracism and even exposed his life to danger. He campaigned against polygamy but failed to secure legislation for its abolition.

Vidyasagar's educational reforms achieved much greater practical success. He opened the gates of the Sanskrit College to non-Brahmin students and introduced English studies in that institution. These were important steps towards modernisation of what was so long the premier seminary for the priestly caste. He simplified and modernised the teaching of Sanskrit. He wrote introductory text-books on the subject which are used even now. He worked for the spread of vernacular education and wrote a simple Bengali primer which has retained its value for more than a century. He is one of the founders of the modern Bengali prose style. He took great interest in the education of girls. As a Government Inspector of Schools he organized 35 girls' schools and maintained some of them at his own expense. He was associated with the school for girls founded in Calcutta in 1849 by Drinkwater Bethune, Law Member in the Governor-General's Council. He established a College in Calcutta which is now named after him.

Vidyasagar did not work through any association; his strenuous life is a unique record of individual enterprise. His strong personality enabled him to defy opposition and his dedication to social welfare pushed him through diverse hurdles.

Literature

The impact of the West explains to a large extent the phenomenal development of Bengali literature during the first half of the nineteenth century. Although some earlier specimens of Bengali prose are available, its literary form had its birth in the Fort William College which was founded in 1800. William Carey, who was the head of its Bengali section, and some of his colleagues—particularly Mrityunjay Vidyalkar—produced several prose works. Some of these gave indications of an artistic literary style. Then Rammohun Roy wrote numerous works in Bengali prose which greatly helped its development. The process was accelerated by Bengali periodicals like the *Samachara-Darpana* and the *Tattvabodhini Patrika*. While the early writers of Bengali prose 'looked for sustenance and development to the rich resources of Sanskrit and the spoken language of the people', they 'drank deeply at the fountain of English literature'. To the second generation of eminent Bengali prose-writers belonged Pearychand Mitra, Devendranath Tagore, Iswarchandra Vidyasagar and Akshaykumar Dutta. Pearychand used the colloquial style. Devendranath's style was chaste but simple. Vidyasagar rescued Bengali style from the pedantry of the *pandits* (Sanskrit scholars) and the vulgarity of the realists'. Akshaykumar's style was heavy but graceful.

Unlike prose, poetry had a long history before it felt the impact of the West. The transition from the old to the new is represented by Iswarchandra Gupta. The first great poet of the new school is Michael Madhusudan Dutta, a converted Hindu and a distinguished pupil of the Hindu College. He introduced the blank verse and used it with remarkable success in his work, *Meghanadavadha Kavya*, published in 1861. He was a passionate student of English literature and knew several European languages—French, Italian, Greek, Latin. A contemporary poet, Rangalal Bandyopadhyaya, wrote a long poem on a popular historical episode : *Padmini Upakhyaana*.

Madhusudan was not only a great poet but also a pioneer among Bengali dramatists. Two contemporary dramatists dealt

with new subjects unconnected with mythology or history. Ram-narayan Tarkaratna wrote on the evils of *Kulinism* among the Brahmins. Dinabandhu Mitra's *Nildarpana*, published in 1860, exposed the tyranny of the European indigo-planters.

Bombay and Madras

The impact of Western ideas was felt much earlier, and far more effectively, in Bengal than in Bombay and Madras. The Madras Native Association and the Bombay Association, linked with the British Indian Association, ceased to be effective political bodies after the 'Sepoy Mutiny'.

Traces of a new political consciousness in Maharashtra might be found in the career of Jagannath Sankerset (1803-75). But the first political thinker in Maharashtra in post-Peshwa times was Gopal Hari Deshmukh (1823-92), better known as 'Lokahitawadi'. He demanded for India 'a Parliament like that of England' and recommended revival of village communities. Dr. Bhau Daji (1821-74) was a practical critic of the Company's system of government rather than a man of new political ideas. Vishnu Bhikaji Gokhale (1825-71) was a revivalist. He did not know English; his ideas were derived from ancient scriptures, but these were applied to the current political, economic and social problems.

The Press

The pioneers in the field of discussion of public issues in periodicals in India were Europeans who vigorously criticised the Company's Government and its officials. They represented the point of view of those Europeans who resented the Company's commercial monopoly. In 1780 James Augustus Hickey started in Calcutta a weekly paper called *Bengal Gazette*. He demanded liberty of the press. He was convicted of libel and sent to prison. The British journalists initiated the tradition of criticism of official measures and policies.

The first Bengali newspapers—two weeklies called *Bengal Gazeti* and *Samachar Darpan*—were published in 1818. These were followed by two other weeklies: the *Sambad-Kaumudi* (1821) conducted by Rammohun Roy and the *Samachar-Chandrika* (1822) representing the orthodox section of the Hindu society. By 1839 Calcutta had 26 European and 9 Indian newspapers, Bombay had 10 European and 4 Indian newspapers, and Madras had 9 European newspapers. In 1851 the *Rast*

Gofdar, a Gujarati fortnightly, appeared in Bombay under the editorship of Dadabhai Naoroji. The *Hindoo Patriot*, issued from Calcutta in 1853, acquired great importance under the editorship of Harishchandra Mukherjee, one of the greatest of Indian journalists in the nineteenth century. Advocacy of political progress and social reforms gradually became the objective of the Indian press.

The official policy of the Government centred round the suppression of the offending journals and the deportation of the indiscreet editors. Wellesley and Minto imposed rigorous restrictions on the press; Lord Hastings relaxed them. Adam, who succeeded Lord Hastings as officiating Governor-General, deported James Silk Buckingham, editor of the *Calcutta Journal*, suppressed his paper, and issued a Regulation prohibiting the publication of any periodical without obtaining a license from the Government (1823). Rammohun Roy pleaded for liberty of the press in a memorial to the Supreme Court as also in an Appeal to the King in Council. There was no change in official policy during the administration of Amherst. Bentinck did not repeal Adam's Regulation, but he did not use it against any newspaper. His successor as officiating Governor-General, Sir Charles Metcalfe, recognized the freedom of the press by an Act passed in 1835. He was penalised for this by the Court of Directors: his claim to promotion was ignored.

3. RELIGION

Christianity

Until the close of the eighteenth century whatever progress Christianity had made was in South India. This was due to individual efforts made by Protestant missionaries from Denmark and Germany. Abbe Dubois wrote at the close of the eighteenth or the beginning of the nineteenth century that 'there was no human possibility of crossing the overwhelming and invincible barrier of Brahminical prejudice as to convert the Hindus as a nation to any sect of Christianity', but he thought that low castes and outcastes might be converted in large numbers.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century missionary activity expanded in North India, particularly in Bengal. William Carey, an English cobbler, came to Calcutta in 1793 to

undertake an Evangelical mission. As the Company's authorities did not allow the missionaries to work in British territory he migrated to Serampore (near Calcutta) which was under Danish rule and there set up the Serampore Mission with the assistance of William Ward and Joshua Marshman. In seven years he could not make a single convert, but he did splendid work in promoting education and improving vernaculars in different parts of India.

The Charter Act of 1813 removed the restrictions on the entry and work of the missionaries in British territory. A Bishop, with headquarters in Calcutta, was appointed with jurisdiction over the whole of the Company's dominions. There was a heavy influx of missionaries from England and America. In the twenties three groups of missionaries became active in Bengal: London Missionary Society, Baptist Missionary Society (Serampore), Church Missionary Society. A representative of the General Assembly of Scotland, Alexander Duff, came in 1830 and lived in India till 1863. Apart from preaching Christianity the missionaries played a vital role in spreading English education and attacking Hindu social abuses.

The Company's Government did not actively support the propagation of Christianity, but a section of its officers regarded proselytism as a part of their duty as pious Christians. Some educated Indians were attracted towards Christianity because they associated it with the liberal ideas of the West and detested the superstitious beliefs of their own society. Among the converts were some high-caste Hindus in Calcutta, such as Michael Madhusudan Dutta and K. M. Banerjee, as also some well-to-do Parsi youngmen in Bombay. Such conversions created sensations and alarmed the Hindu society. But the success of the missionaries was insignificant from the numerical point of view, and their appeal to educated youngmen lost its force as the Brahmo movement gathered momentum. The missionaries discredited themselves by their reckless criticism of Hinduism.

Brahmo Samaj

The Brahmo Samaj was reduced to a precarious condition after the death of Rammohun Roy in 1833. Soon, however, it found a young, enthusiastic and resourceful patron in Devendra-nath Tagore (1817-1905), the eldest son of Dwarkanath Tagore and the father of Rabindranath Tagore. Educated in the Hindu College, he embraced the Brahmo faith in 1838 and established

the *Tattvabodhini Sabha* in 1839 for the propagation of enlightened ideas. He was disturbed by the prevalence of idolatry among those who professed to be members of the Brahmo Samaj. In 1843 he, along with twenty associates, signed a covenant which imposed the obligation of conforming to the Vedanta and worshipping God by the *gayatri-mantra*. This was the first step towards converting the Brahmo Samaj, which was initially conceived as a universal church, into a distinct spiritual fraternity. The *Tattvabodhini Sabha* became a missionary organization. Preachers were engaged to propagate the new creed in the mofussil and local centres (*Samajas*) were established. Its monthly journal, the *Tattvabodhini Patrika*, spread reformist and progressive ideas on religious, social and agrarian issues.

In 1845 a controversy arose in the Brahmo Samaj on the infallibility of the Vedas which had so long been regarded as the basis of its creed. Devendranath rejected the doctrine of infallibility. He based the new creed on selected passages from the Upanishads which inculcated monotheism, and to these were added certain fundamental principles of Natural Theism. A new covenant was prepared, replacing the Vedantic covenant of 1843.

Islamic revivalism

Shah Waliullah (1703-64) of Delhi was the last great theologian of the Mughal Empire. He found Indian Islam threatened from two directions. The non-Muslims—Marathas, British, Sikhs—were occupying the Mughal territories. The Muslims, crippled by political weakness, were further weakened by dissensions over dogmas and social practices. The need of the hour was the regeneration of Islam, and to that great task Waliullah dedicated himself. Recovery of political power would not be possible unless Islam gave up non-Islamic ideas and practices which had crept into it from the Hindu society. He reminded the Muslims that they must follow a purified form of Islam and look upon themselves as members of the larger Muslim world.

Waliullah's teachings continued to be stressed by his son and grandson, Shah Abdul Aziz and Shah Mohammad Ishaq, till the latter's migration to Mecca in 1841 after the failure of the Wahabi war in the north-west. But his influence persisted

and shaped the ideas of some sections of Indian Muslims for many years.

Wahabi movement in Arabia

The Wahabis, a sect of Islam founded in Arabia by Abdul Wahab (1703-92), were pledged to restore Islam to the form it had in the days of the Prophet, rejecting as idolatrous all innovations in ceremonies which had developed since that time. They regarded it as their duty to spread the purified form of Islam by the sword. This involved them in political struggles and military encounters in Arabia in the second half of the eighteenth century.

In the Wahabi movement religious and political forces worked together to achieve a common objective, viz., the establishment of a true Islamic State in which Islam, in its purified form, would regulate the citizen's life. But the Wahabi interpretation of Islam was not consistent with the traditional interpretation supported by the orthodox theologians at Mecca. As a result, it really had little support from the Muslim masses who preferred the old and far less puritanical way of life.

Wahabi movement in India

Wahabism appeared in India at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was derived from two sources, one internal and the other external—the philosophy of Shah Waliullah and the teachings of Abdul Wahab. Its founder in India was Syed Ahmad of Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh (1786-1831). There were two forces behind it. One was the socio-religious degradation of the Indian Muslims as a result of infiltration of un-Islamic ideas and practices into their faith. The other was the loss of political power due to the rise of the Marathas, the Sikhs and the British, resulting in the conversion of India from a *dar-ul-Islam* (land of Muslims) to a *dar-ul-harb* (land of non-Muslims).

Syed Ahmad lived a life of adventure. He was educated at Delhi in a school founded by Shah Waliullah and was a disciple of the latter's son, Shah Abdul Aziz. Already Abdul Aziz had issued a *fatwa* declaring India as a *dar-ul-harb* and begun to organize centres in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar for the purpose of launching a *jihad* (holy war). He selected Syed Ahmad as his principal instrument. With a view to gaining military experience and coming into contact with Muslim soldiers Syed Ahmad joined the army of Amir Khan, the Pathan leader in Rajasthan, in 1809. Apparently he had already decided in

favour of an armed struggle. After Amir Khan's submission to the British he returned to Delhi (1817), and received from Abdul Aziz his white robe and black turban. He spent several years in organization and preaching. Then he went to Mecca (1821) and came into contact with the Arabian Wahabis.

It was only by overthrowing non-Muslim rule that the reformed faith—the purified form of Islam—could be enforced in India. For this purpose an army and a non-official organization, functioning in secrecy, had to be created by missionary leaders. Syed Ahmad took up the leadership, and claimed to be an *Imam* to justify and strengthen his position.

After return from Mecca Syed Ahmad made preparations for migration (*hijrat*) from British territories to the independent tribal area in the north-west from which it would be convenient to wage the projected military operations. It was populated almost exclusively by Muslims who resented the encroaching political authority of the Sikhs in their homeland. It was not accessible for large armies hostile to the Muslim warriors; the barren hills stood as barriers against outsiders.

The idea behind the *hijrat* was that true Muslims could not live in a *dar-ul-harb*. Starting from Bareilly in 1826, Syed Ahmad and his followers proceeded *via* Central India, Rajasthan and Sind to Peshawar. The tribal people joined them. The campaigns which followed were directed principally against the Sikhs, but some tribal chiefs were selected as targets of attack because they did not accept the Wahabi ban on certain religious practices current in their areas. Ranjit Singh, who had captured Peshawar from the Afghans in 1820, defeated the Wahabis at Balakote in 1831; Syed Ahmad fell fighting.

The first phase of the Wahabi movement was over. Syed Ahmad's struggle was directed against the Sikhs, not against the British. The second phase of the Wahabi movement was definitely anti-British. The leadership was assumed by two Bihari Muslims, Wilayat Ali and Enayet Ali, whose operations in the north-west began in the mid-forties. They founded a principality in the frontier region which was administered in accordance with Islamic ideals as interpreted by the Wahabis. The British Government established control over the Lahore Durbar and Gulab Singh became ruler of Kashmir in 1846. Determined to establish their authority over the tribal region, they confronted the tribal chiefs and the Wahabis. Wilayat

Ali and Enayet Ali surrendered to the British in 1847 and were sent to Patna, but they were allowed to return to the north-west in 1851. Wilayat Ali died in 1852. Enayet Ali functioned as leader of the Wahabis from Sittana till his death in 1858.

The Wahabis, weakened by the arrest of some of their leaders and the isolation of their principal centre at Sittana, failed to play any important role in the 'Sepoy Mutiny'. But they continued their military efforts for many years; they took part in the tribal war of 1897-99. In North India—Bihar and Bengal—the Wahabi movement was practically crushed by vigorous administrative measures and heavy punishment inflicted by judicial tribunals after the 'Sepoy Mutiny'.

The Wahabi movement had no nationalist character. There were Muslims who were not prepared to accept the Wahabi injunctions on some old religious practices. The Hindus had no reason to welcome an Islamic State ruled according to Wahabi principles. The Wahabi ideal of converting a *dar-ul-harb* into a *dar-ul-Islam* was a purely Islamic ideal which had little relevance to nineteenth-century India. Sir Syed Ahmad stressed the point that the Wahabis fought against the Sikhs and not against the British. The British rulers focussed attention on the second phase of the Wahabi movement and represented it as a rebellion against the British Government. They were right; but a rebellion aiming at replacing British rule by Muslim rule based on Islamic orthodoxy could not be regarded as a struggle for India's *political* freedom.

Muslim movements in Bengal

Two movements in Bengal, having close resemblance with the Wahabi movement, assumed a political-cum-economic character.

The Faraizi movement was founded by Shariatullah (1781-1840). He spent twenty years in Arabia in theological studies. Anticipating some of the ideas of the later Wahabi movement, he condemned un-Islamic practices followed by his co-religionists and declared Bengal under British rule as a *dar-ul-harb*. After his death his son Muhammad Mohsin (1819-62), better known as Dudu Mian, organized the Muslim peasantry in some eastern districts (which are now in Bangladesh) not only for following purified religious practices but also for resist-

ing the oppressive activities of the European indigo-planters and the zamindars who were mostly Hindus. He was prosecuted by the British authorities several times on different charges. His successor Abdul Ghafur (1852-84), better known as Naya Mian, adopted a moderate attitude towards the British Government. This policy was continued by his successor Saijuddin (1855-1906). On religious issues the influence of the Faraizis was considerable even during the closing years of the nineteenth century, but they lost interest in the economic issues which had been stressed by Dudu Mian.

Another movement, more closely connected with Wahabi ideas, was organized in the Baraset area (near Calcutta) by Mir Nisar Ali or Titu Mir (1782-1831). He met Syed Ahmad at Mecca in 1822 and became his disciple. Returning home in 1827, he organized the Muslim peasantry in three contiguous districts against the European indigo-planters and the Hindu zamindars. Opposition came not only from these two powerful groups but also from orthodox Muslims who resented his insistence on Wahabi practices in religious matters. His followers 'affected a kind of military order and marched in ranks'. He constructed a bamboo stockade. These measures alienated the British authorities. He fell fighting in an armed encounter, with a British contingent in 1831. His movement collapsed after his death.

Neither the Faraizi leaders nor Titu Mir had the capacity to formulate a long-term political objective or to create an organization which could command more than local and communal influence. They have no claim to be regarded as national heroes in the political sphere.

These two movements had no impact on the policy of the Government. The disturbances resulting from their activities were treated as a law-and-order problem, not as an agrarian problem calling for remedial legislation. Nor can these movements be looked upon as a special type of Hindu-Muslim confrontation, for neither the Faraizi leaders nor Titu Mir could attract the support of the richer or orthodox classes among the Muslims.

CHAPTER 12

ECONOMY

During the eighteenth century several factors contributed to the gradual re-shaping of India's medieval system of economy. The most important of these factors was the continuous pressure of large-scale political changes culminating in the establishment of an all-India empire by a foreign nation. The alien rulers used their political power as an instrument of economic exploitation. The area of exploitation extended with the expansion of their political power. The Industrial Revolution, which changed the nature of British economy in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, had a direct and powerful impact on India's economy. The general result was the transformation of India from a manufacturing to a raw-material-producing country. This radical change increased the pressure on land and contributed to important changes in the agrarian system.

The Charter Act of 1813 gave a new complexion to the transformation of Indian economy. It took away the Company's monopoly of Indian trade, and threw India open to commercial exploitation by the English free-traders. Twenty years later the Company ceased to be a trading body, but its patronage helped private European enterprise to flourish at the cost of the traders and people of India.

Period I : 1707-1813

I. TRADE AND COMMERCE

Seventeenth century

During the seventeenth century India's commercial activity far surpassed that of the European commercial countries. She was 'the largest producer of industrial goods in the world'. Her principal exports consisted of fine cotton and silk fabrics, spices, indigo, sugar, drugs, precious stones and diverse works of art. Imports were few, and consequently the balance of trade was in her favour. Her products found their way to Europe through European merchants who generally paid for them by specie,

for the European countries did not produce much that could be sold in India. Gold and silver flowed into the country and added to her wealth. India became a 'sink of precious metals'. Her place in world trade has been described as follows: 'India was the respiratory organ for the circulation and distribution of moneys and commodities of the world; it was the sea wherein all the rivers of trade and industry flowed and thus enriched its inhabitants'.

Apart from the European trade, India had a flourishing trade with other countries of Asia. 'Bombay was one of the first marts in India, and employed a great number of vessels in its extensive commerce' with the Persian Gulf ports. India's industry profited from her commercial relations with the countries of Asia—from Arabia to China—and the eastern coast of Africa. At the same time there was a prosperous inter-provincial trade which was a very important feature of the country's economic life. Bengal, for example, traded with different parts of North India, Nepal, Assam, the Punjab, Kashmir, Gujarat, and places on the Malabar and Coromandel coasts. These commercial transactions were sustained by organized caravan and river-borne traffic, a network of banking and wholesale mercantile establishments, and the system of payment by *hundis*.

Beginnings of decline

The decline of India's trade and commerce began in the early years of the eighteenth century. By the end of Aurangzib's reign 'the Indian economy was a shrinking economy'. His long war in the Deccan and the lawlessness developing in North India due to the weakness of the imperial machinery of administration reduced cultivation of land as also industrial production. The disintegration of the Mughal Empire after his death created conditions unfavourable to regular production and distribution of commercial goods. Peace was disturbed by rebellions and wars. The system of policing the roads collapsed. Trade suffered not only from insecurity but also from vexatious imposts levied by local princes and petty chiefs. Virtually deprived of the protection of the State, the traders engaged parties of armed men, 'formed connections with ministers and commanders of armies, contracted engagements with plundering chieftains and robbers, and had their goods, whether exported or imported, guarded like the baggage of an army'.

Foreign trade was seriously affected by the ruin of Indian shipping, first by the Portuguese, then by the Dutch and English rivalry in the Asiatic seas. For this the Mughal Emperors' neglect of sea power was largely responsible. India lost her old markets in South-East Asia, West Asia and Africa as a result of the dwindling of her mercantile marine.

The Mughal Emperors' generosity in granting concessions to the European merchants injured the interest of the indigenous traders. In 1652 the English, and in 1665 the Dutch, obtained from Shah Jahan exemption from all tolls from Surat to all inland centres, and from Hughli or Pipli to Agra and Delhi. They also secured reduction of customs duties and other privileges which the Indian traders did not enjoy. These concessions enabled them to grab a share in the inter-provincial trade. Farrukh-siyar's *farman* of 1716, which provided for an extraordinary reduction of customs duties for the English merchants at Surat and in Bengal, helped them to weaken their Dutch and Indian rivals.

During the early years of the eighteenth century the English merchants finally concentrated their commercial interest in India, leaving the islands of South-East Asia to the Dutch. Their organizational position was strengthened by the union of the two rival Companies (1702) which had been trading in the East. Taking advantage of the disintegration of the Mughal Empire the United East India Company began to fortify its factories. Thus it started on the road to become 'the most formidable commercial republic known in the world since the demolition of Carthage'. The prosperity of England's trade with India did not blind the English Parliament to the interest of the industrial producers of England. An Act passed in 1700 prohibited the use of Asiatic silks and printed and dyed calicoes in England, though these could still be imported into England for re-exportation. Another Act, passed in 1720, generally prohibited the wear and use of calicoes dyed or printed in England. Protective duties for the benefit of the English weaving industry were gradually raised to about 80 per cent in subsequent decades. Such legislation contributed to the decline of the Indian handloom industry.

English trade after Plassey

During the half century preceding Plassey the trade of the

English Company prospered in India despite political disturbances, war and competition from the French and the Dutch. Along with the Company's trade the private trade of its servants also developed. In Bengal the English put their own interpretation on Farrukh-siyar's *farman* and claimed rights which were not really warranted by the imperial grant. Even then they had to reckon with the competition of Indian traders and French and Dutch merchants; and the restraints imposed by the Nawabs could not be ignored.

After Plassey the nature of English trade changed: it passed from competition to monopoly. The political developments in Bengal (1757-65) and the victories over the French (1756-63) and the Dutch (1659) placed the English in a position highly favourable for the establishment of their monopolistic control over India's trade, industry and economic resources. There was a steady increase of both the exports and imports of the Company. As it could utilize the surplus territorial revenues of Bengal for its 'investment' there was an excess of exports over imports. The import of bullion was stopped, not only by the English but also by the other foreign traders.

After 1757 there was a large-scale English invasion of Bengal's inland trade. The Company's servants swallowed the trade in commodities like salt, betelnut and tobacco which had so long been prohibited to all European traders. This was one of the factors which led to the rupture with Mr. Kasim. After the acquisition of the *Dewani* the Court of Directors tried to control the private trade of the Company's servants; but the 'orders of distant masters were but a feeble barrier against the united interest of every man in the settlement'. The Company's servants carried on trade under the names of their 'black agents'. They also acted as agents for the Company's 'investment' which amounted to ten million current rupees in 1777.

The 'British Free Merchants', i.e., British merchants unconnected with the Company as share-holders or servants, carried on trade under certain conditions. With the co-operation of the Company's servants they tried to exclude the Bengali and American merchants from trade in cotton piecegoods.

Free trade

Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776, strongly advocated free trade ideas which ran counter to the principle of the Company's monopoly based on royal char-

ters. This new approach to the question of England's external trade could not be ignored by Parliament when it had to consider the renewal of the Company's Charter in 1793. While renewing the Company's privileges for another twenty years, the Act permitted all British subjects to take a share of the export trade under certain conditions. This provision benefited the British residents in India during the next few years; but the long war with France which began in 1793 created many difficulties. Wellesley relaxed the conditions imposed by the Act of 1793 and adopted a liberal trade policy for the convenience of the 'British Free Merchants'. There was considerable increase in the volume of private trade between England and India till 1803, but it began to be reduced in later years because the demand of the European continental countries for Indian goods decreased on account of the Napoleonic War.

2. INDUSTRY

In the eighteenth century India's industries not only supplied the needs of her population but also left enough surplus for export to different countries of the world. The various industries were cotton and silk textile, sugar, saltpetre, salt, opium, indigo, jute, metallic manufactures (iron, glass, arms, etc.) and minor products (boats, oils, drugs, perfumes, etc.). There was specialisation in different handicrafts which contributed to industrial efficiency.

Textiles

The principal industries were the cotton and silk textiles. These, like most other industries, were organized on domestic basis. The centres of this industry were spread over different parts of the country: Gujarat, the Coromandel coast, Bengal-Bihar-Orissa, Benares and some other places in Uttar Pradesh, Burhanpur in Khandesh, Mysore. At Dacca different varieties of *muslin* were manufactured. In 1772 a European writer observed: 'The demands for Bengal manufactures can never lessen; their quality is so peculiar to that country, that no nation on the globe can either equal or rival them'.

In the early years of the eighteenth century 'the use of printed Indian calicoes, both in apparel and household manufacture, became so universal in England as to be a great detri-

ment to the woollen and silk manufactures of the kingdom'. Parliament passed various prohibitory and sumptuary laws for the protection of the English weaving industry.

After the acquisition of political power in Bengal the Company followed the policy of reducing India from a manufacturing to a raw-material-producing country. In 1769 the Court of Directors issued the following order: 'Manufacture of raw silk should be encouraged in Bengal and that of manufactured silk fabrics should be discouraged and silk winders should be forced to work in the Company's factories and prohibited from working in their houses under severe penalties by the authority of the Government'.

The Company advanced money to the weavers through *gumastas* and exercised a monopolistic control over them so that they were not permitted to work for others. Thus the weavers could not obtain a just price for their cloths. Bolts, a senior servant of the Company, wrote in 1772 that weavers who dared to sell their goods to purchasers other than the Company were 'frequently seized and imprisoned, confined in irons, fined considerable sums of money, and deprived, in the most ignominious manner, of what they esteem most valuable, their crafts'. He adds that 'instances have been known of their cutting off their thumbs, to prevent their being forced to wind silk'. The result of such methods was the wholesale abandonment of their occupation by the weavers and the decline of the weaving industry in Bengal. This was accelerated by the rise of prices of cotton in Bengal which was due to the establishment of some kind of monopoly of Bombay and Surat cotton by the Company.

Other industries

After Plassey the Company's servants sought to bring the manufacture and sale of salt under their absolute control. In 1765 Clive established monopoly of salt manufacture and trade through a Society. This system was abolished in 1768 and the zamindars and Indian merchants were permitted to manufacture salt, subject to payment of a duty of 30 per cent to the Company's Government. In 1772 this privilege was withdrawn, and the Company's monopoly was established. In 1776 Warren Hastings introduced a new scheme of leasing out to individuals the privilege of manufacturing and selling salt. In 1780 he assumed for the Company's Government the exclusive right of

manufacturing salt. Cornwallis introduced certain changes. The system of monopoly was extended to Benares as also to the 'Ceded and Conquered Provinces'. Steps were taken to prevent the import of salt into Bengal from outside, except from the Coromandel Coast and the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf regions.

These experiments had three important effects. There was dislocation in the salt trade. The price of salt increased and the common people were badly affected. The actual manufacturers of salt—the *Ajjarah Molungis*—worked under a 'system of coercion' and were reduced, in fact, to the position of slaves.

Sugar was manufactured on a large scale in Bengal where it was the third important industry after cotton and silk. Before Plassey production was not only adequate for local consumption; a large surplus was available for export to Europe, America, Africa and some Asiatic countries. The trade suffered decline in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The Company's attempt to introduce the method of sugar cultivation adopted in the West Indies proved unsuccessful. The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars caused a fall in the quantity of Bengal sugar exported to the European continental countries. Moreover, the duties on Bengal sugar in England were heavier as compared with low duties on West Indian sugar.

The opium monopoly was 'a principal branch of the East India Company's territorial revenue in India'. The Bihar Opium Agency supplied the bulk of the opium for the Company's trade. There was another Agency at Benares. China was the largest market for Bengal and Bihar opium; smaller purchasers included East Indies and Pegu.

The export of indigo from India by the Company began in the early years of the seventeenth century. The growing production of indigo in the West Indies led to a fall in the demand for Indian indigo in the British market in the early years of the eighteenth century. About the middle of the eighteenth century the cultivation of indigo was given up in the West Indies, and England turned for supply to America. The War of American Independence cut off this source; England turned to India. By 1793 indigo became an important item of export. The indigo-planters were 'British Free Traders'. They received assistance from the Company in the form of loans and in other ways; a large number of indigo factories sprang up,

particularly in Bengal and Bihar. Their oppression on the cultivators began in the early years of the nineteenth century.

Bengal, particularly North Bengal, was an important jute-producing area, and hand-woven jute was an important subsidiary industry of the people. The Company exported gunny bags from Bengal.

As saltpetre was an ingredient for the manufacture of gunpowder it was in great demand among the European nations during their wars in the eighteenth century. It was manufactured principally in Bihar; but there were centres for its manufacture in the Northern *Sarkars*, in Mysore, in Uttar Pradesh and in Bengal. It was from Bihar that the European Companies exported saltpetre in large quantities, and the Dutch and French merchants were competitors of the English. In 1758 Clive secured from Mir Jafar monopoly of the saltpetre trade in Bengal for the Company. After this the Dutch and the French could buy saltpetre only in times of peace from the English factory at Patna. The result was that the Company sold saltpetre more during peace times than during wars. In 1793, following the outbreak of the Revolutionary War in France, the export of saltpetre by foreigners and to foreign countries was prohibited. Soon afterwards the restriction was waived in favour of neutral nations like the Danes and the Americans. During the early years of the nineteenth century the Company's Government lost its interest in maintaining the monopoly of saltpetre manufacture.

India had a flourishing ship-building industry. Its chief centres were Surat, Bombay and Daman on the west coast and Hughli, Dacca and Chittagong in Bengal. Surat was famous for construction of 'incomparably the best ships in the world for duration'; these were of all sizes and capacity of over a thousand tons. Private individuals, particularly Parsis, were the leaders of the ship-building industry. The deficiency of tonnage expected from Europe during the Revolutionary War compelled the Company to permit the 'British Free Merchants' of Calcutta to use India-built ships for export and import trade with England. Wellesley licensed some India-built ships to proceed to London in 1799-1800. Between 1781 and 1821 no less than 272 ships of a total tonnage of 1,22,693 were launched by the Hughli dockyard. Gradually the restrictions imposed on Indian shipping in the interest of British shipping killed this important industry of this country.

Industrial Revolution in England

The Industrial Revolution in England in the closing decades of the eighteenth and the early years of the nineteenth century stimulated her productive power. England's political power in India enabled the British manufacturers to convert this country into a vast market for their goods. The result was an 'economic revolution' which made India a land of poverty in the nineteenth century.

Indian industry continued to use the old methods of production while the advent of machinery revolutionized the methods of production in England. Through laws and administrative policies the British Government in England and the Company's Government in India used this advantage of the British manufacturers to the detriment of their Indian rivals. The inventions of Hargreaves, Arkwright and others during the years 1767-85 helped extensive production of cotton goods in England. In 1786 the Court of Directors made the first tentative efforts for sale of Lancashire cotton cloths in Bengal. In 1793 'the calicoes and muslins' of India, even for Indian use, were supplanted at Santipur, an important weaving centre in Bengal, by the products of the steamlooms of Manchester'. When the Napoleonic War came to an end the entire British tonnage, so long employed against France, came to be used for carrying goods to the eastern countries. In 1815 the Bengal Government reduced the import duty on British goods by 2½ per cent, delivering thereby a severe blow at Indian industry. On the other hand, the commercial policy of the British Government in England aimed at protecting, encouraging and helping the growth of English manufactures and stimulating the foreign demand for English products. The unorganized Indian manufacturers, incapable of using improved scientific methods, discriminated against in respect of duties by the Company's Government, could not face this unequal and unfair competition.

3 'PLASSEY PLUNDER'

One important feature of the economic history of India in the decades following the battle of Plassey was the flow of a vast amount of her wealth out of the country with 'no equivalent returns'. This 'economic drain' was an integral feature

of the East India Company's administrative and economic policies. It also illustrates the character and methods of the Company's servants who founded the British Empire in India. It affected Bengal much more than Madras and Bombay because the incomes of these two Presidencies were less than their actual needs.

Amount of 'drain'

There are different estimates of the total amount of the 'economic drain', primarily because it is not possible to extract full and accurate statistics from incomplete and conflicting contemporary records. According to Verelst, Governor of Bengal, during the five years following the grant of the *Dewani* (1765) goods and bullion of the total value of 4,941,611 million pounds sterling went out of the country. The historian Dow wrote about 1770 that Bengal lost yearly to Europe on account of the 'drain' about 1,477,500 pounds sterling. According to a modern historian, during the period 1757-1780 the amount of 'drain' on Bengal's resources was about 38 million pounds sterling in the important items only, excluding other items. An American historian says that the 'drain' should not be reckoned as exceeding 1,800,000 pounds sterling annually during the period 1783-93.

Forms of 'economic drain'

The 'economic drain' had several forms. Whether there was a heavy 'drain' from Bengal in respect of direct export of bullion is a controversial point. Probably the direct export of silver was, on the whole, negligible; but private fortunes obtained by the Company's servants and other Europeans in India were remitted to Europe through various means. During the years 1757-1766 individual Englishmen received from the princes and other persons in Bengal no less than 50 millions of current rupees in the form of illegal presents and perquisites. The practice continued even after the prohibition imposed by the Court of Directors in 1766. Among the persons against whom charges covering the post-1766 period have been made on this ground are Warren Hastings and his supporter in the Council, Barwell. Secondly, the Company's servants earned large incomes through their participation in inland trade. Thirdly, the 'British Free Merchants' made fortune through their private trade.

Two methods were generally adopted by the Company's servants for remitting their private fortunes to England. One of these was sending of diamonds to Europe—a method followed by the 'British Free Merchants' as well. The other was to issue bills of exchange on the East India Company or any of the other European Companies.

For the most serious 'drain' on Bengal's capital the East India Company itself was directly responsible. First, the Company purchased its 'investments' from Bengal out of the surplus territorial revenues of this province after the acquisition of *Dewani* (1765). It became 'the supreme ruler of a rich and fertile kingdom' and used its revenues partly for purposes with which its people had no concern. Secondly, the Company's Government in Bengal frequently provided financial assistance to the Governments at Madras and Bombay for their ordinary civil purposes as also for their wars—the First and Second Anglo-Mysore Wars and the First Anglo-Maratha War, for instance. Thirdly, the Company's China trade was fully financed from Bengal, although this province gained nothing in return. This 'drain' took the form of export of bullion. One pernicious effect of this export was scarcity of silver in Bengal which was largely responsible for the currency muddle in the province in the second half of the eighteenth century.

4. CURRENCY AND BANKING

Currency

The complications in the currency system of Bengal were due mainly to two factors: lack of a uniform currency and multiplicity of coins, and scarcity of silver.

There were no less than 27 varieties (*sicca*, *sonaut*, *Arcot*, *dasma*, *Narayani*, etc.) of rupees in general use, though the *sicca* was the standard legal tender. According to the trade usage of each different market these coins were liable to different rates of discount. In order to make exchanges possible the values of actual rupees of every kind were expressed in terms of an ideal rupee known as the *current* (or normal) rupee. Thus, in Bengal at the beginning of the eighteenth century 100 *sicca* rupees were equivalent to 112½ *current* rupees. Subsequently 100 Murshidabad *sicca* rupees, just after they were struck, were equal to 116 *current* rupees. After three years of circulation

their value came down to 111 *current* rupees and these were then called *sonaut* rupees. At Madras, where the English Company had a mint of its own, variations in the value of the rupee in the early years of the century did not cause so much inconvenience. The *Arcot* coin was originally struck by the Nawab of Arcot. Subsequently the English, the French and the Dutch got the privilege of coining it.

The circulation of varieties of coins and the exaction of *batta* (discount) by the shroffs caused great difficulties. These were aggravated by scarcity of coins due to short supply of silver. Several measures were introduced by Warren Hastings, Cornwallis and Shore to reform the currency system. Copper coins were introduced gradually in Bengal.

The multiplicity of coins was an economic evil in other parts of India as well. In the Madras Presidency the current coins in the early years of the nineteenth century were *pagodas* of different kinds, the *Arcot* rupee, single and double *fanams*, and copper coins. In Gujarat and Bombay varieties of silver rupees were in circulation. Silver and copper coins were current in Central India. There were mints in several important towns, such as Ujjain, Indore, Bhopal and Kotah. Individual bankers and merchants were permitted to coin money of the regulated standard.

Indigenous banking

The most important indigenous banking agency during the greater part of the eighteenth century was the house of *Jagat Seths*. Hirachand Sahu, belonging to the Oswal sect of the Jains, came from Nagar in Marwar to Patna and started a *kuthi* there. His eldest son Manik Chand went to Dacca and established a banking house there in 1700. With the transfer of the capital of Bengal to Murshidabad Manik Chand transferred his seat of business to the new centre of administration. Aurangzib honoured him with the title of *Jagat Seth*. His successor, Fateh Chand, managed the business of the house from 1714 to 1744. He received the title of *Jagat Seth* from the Emperor Muhammad Shah. His elder grandson Mahatap Chand also received the title of *Jagat Seth*. It was under Mahatap Chand that the house of *Jagat Seth* attained the height of prosperity. According to a contemporary Muslim historian, 'their riches were so great that no such bankers were ever seen in Hindustan or the Deccan'. The records of the European Companies contain many

references to their importance in monetary transactions. They also actively participated in political transactions before and after Plassey. The European Companies borrowed money from them and sold their bullion to them.

The house of *Jagat Seth* had branches in the important cities from Delhi to Dacca and there was a great demand for their *hundis*. The Bengal Nawab's tribute of one *crore* was sent to the Emperor by Fateh Chand through a single *hundi*. The *zamindars* and the *ijaradars* paid their revenues to the Nawab through the house of *Jagat Seth*. A British officer wrote after Plassey: '*Jagat Seth* is in a manner the Government's banker; about two-thirds of the revenues are paid into his house, and the Governments give their draft on him in the same manner as a merchant on the bank'.

The fortunes of the house of *Jagat Seth* declined after Mahatap Chand and Swarup Chand were killed under the orders of Mir Kasim (1763). After the grant of *Dewani* to the Company the house had practically no business in the sector of revenue transmission. After the transfer of the treasury from Murshidabad to Calcutta by Warren Hastings the house virtually ceased to be the Government's banker.

There were some other prominent bankers in different parts of India who did not possess the same status and influence as the house of *Jagat Seth*. Among them mention may be made of several houses of Delhi and Benares. Besides the important banking concerns engaged in all-India transactions, there were minor bankers in many cities and towns. Lower in status were the money-changers (*shroffs*) and money-lenders.

In Gujarat the *Nathjis* served as *shroffs* of the Company and advanced loans. Lord Lake's campaign of 1804 and the Nepal War were largely financed by them.

In the Madras Presidency the Company secured financial co-operation from the Chetties. Some of them served as the Company's bankers and provided cash or bills of exchange on other Indian cities and towns.

European Agency Houses

As the big Indian banking houses lost their prosperity and failed to meet the financial needs of foreign trade which passed into European hands, European Agency Houses and banks sprang up in this country. The Agency Houses were

started by the servants of the Company who, after accumulating large funds, resigned their posts and engaged in agency and mercantile business. In 1790 there were 15 Agency Houses in Calcutta, the majority of them being British. They served as banks of deposit for the Company's servants and functioned as bankers to the European planters and merchants in different parts of the country. They invested money in industries like indigo cultivation and ship-building. They exercised considerable control over the internal and foreign trade of Bengal.

European banks

Already the European merchants' growing demand for credit facilities had prepared the ground for the establishment of European banks. An Agency House of Calcutta started the *Bank of Hindustan* in 1770. A *General Bank* under Government patronage was established for Bengal in 1773, but it was abolished in 1775. Within a few years another bank, called the *Bengal Bank*, was started in Calcutta. It was not connected with any Agency House. In 1786 was started the *General Bank of India*, which was perhaps 'the first joint-stock bank in India with limited liability'. It was dissolved in 1792-93. The *Bank of Calcutta*, re-named the *Bank of Bengal* in 1809, was entrusted with Government funds; its notes alone were recognized by the Government and 'it was easily the premier bank in India at the time'.

The people of India derived no benefit from the early European banks. Their main functions were to finance foreign trade carried on by the European merchants and to maintain the value of Government securities by issue of paper currency.

5. CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE

Some economic classes

Several changes in social stratification which took place during the Mughal period retained their importance in the eighteenth century. The Kayasthas of North India filled administrative posts at different levels of Mughal administration. Their principal qualifications were knowledge of Persian and proficiency in the system of keeping accounts. As the Mughal empire extended southward they went to the Deccan as revenue

officers and accountants. They represented a new middle class which abjured cultivation and physical labour and earned their living by employment in white-collar jobs.

Another class—generally more prosperous—was composed of men engaged in monetary transactions, such as *shroffs* and *sahukars*. The *Baniyas* lived by trade. In Bengal some Hindu employees in the Revenue Department and Hindu revenue-farmers rose to the rank of *zamindar* and became owners of the soil under the Permanent Settlement (1793).

The European merchants fostered—if they did not create—a class of intermediaries to promote their commercial transactions with the indigenous producers and traders. Contractors and brokers (*dalals*) worked for commission. The *gumastas* were regular employees. The *banians* occupied a higher and more important position. These agents enriched themselves by exploiting the artisans and other primary producers.

The slaves belonged to a large and well-recognized social category. Slaves were regularly purchased and registered in the court-house at Calcutta, each slave paying a duty of four rupees to the Company for registration. In 1785 Sir William Jones, a Judge of the Calcutta Supreme Court, spoke of 'large boats filled with children coming down the river (the Hughli) for open sale at Calcutta'. A proclamation issued in 1789 prohibited the traffic in slaves in India, but rural slavery continued in different parts of the country. The slaves generally belonged to the depressed castes. In the early years of the nineteenth century Buchanan found slavery widespread in South India. The cultivation of land was left, for the most part, to the slaves. In Central India Malcolm found many slaves in the households of the Rajput chiefs and the Brahmins. Slavery was generally the result of political disturbances, famine or extreme poverty.

Standard of living

From the later years of the eighteenth century the oppressive features of the Mughal revenue system, coupled with the depreciation of the value of silver in term of copper, compelled the peasantry to part with a larger share of their produce not only to meet the revenue demand of the State but also for payment of interest to their creditors. For the bulk of the population the low standard of living became lower, but 'the official class would not permit any reduction of their official expenses

and their standard of living and status as well as the cost of the troops and horses which they were bound to maintain'.

The debasement of the currency, which began during the Mughal period, continued during the period of the Company's rule. Throughout North India gold almost vanished in the eighteenth century; the currency consisted of silver, copper and cowries. The real wages declined, for the wage rates could not be easily adjusted to the depreciating currency and to general economic conditions. 'As compared with the period of Akbar, real wages in India, measured in terms of the principal food grains, were only three-fifths after the British conquest of Bengal'.

Famines

There were numerous famines in different parts of India in the eighteenth century. The Deccan suffered in 1705-8 and 1790-92; Bombay in 1717-18, 1722, 1728, 1747 and 1782; Madras in 1728, 1731-34, 1737 and 1790-92; Bengal in 1751, 1769-70 and 1788. North India from Multan to Murshidabad suffered in 1783-84, and Hyderabad was affected in 1799-1801. Each famine resulted in appalling mortality. The memory of the Famine of 1770 still haunts the people of Bengal.

Period II : 1813-58

1. ABOLITION OF COMPANY'S MONOPOLY

The Charter Act passed by the British Parliament in 1813 marked a new stage in Britain's commercial relations with India. The Company's two-hundred-year old monopoly of trade with India was abolished; but it retained its monopoly of trade in tea as also its China trade for twenty years. All British subjects were now entitled to carry on export and import trade with India, with the sole exception of tea. The Company's accounts of the political and territorial departments were to be kept 'separately and distinctly' from those of its commercial department.

This was a great victory of the principle of free trade enunciated by Adam Smith in his *Wealth of Nations* published in 1776. Partial concession to this principle had been made by the Charter Act of 1793. The Industrial Revolution had in-

creased production in England and led to accumulation of industrial capital in Lancashire and at Sheffield. The British manufacturing and mercantile interests clamoured for more raw materials, an expanding market for their manufactures, and a larger field for the investment of their capital. The British ship-building industry at outports like Liverpool required employment of shipping which had been rendered idle by the stoppage of the American and the European continental trade. With these powerful voices was united the demand of the Evangelists who 'liked to strike a blow for Christ and civilization' by opening India to the unfettered activities of the missionaries. In the face of such powerful pressure the Company's failure to protect its monopoly was inevitable.

The policy adopted by Parliament in 1813 reached its logical culmination in 1833. The Charter Act passed in that year provided for the abolition of the Company's monopoly of the tea trade, as also of the China trade, with effect from 1834.

India's exposure to the 'full blasts of the (English) Industrial Revolution' did not lead to the industrialization of this country. The British manufacturers in their 'Home' country did not want rivals in India. The British Agency Houses in India which financed foreign trade did not want a radical change in the pattern of that trade. The administrative structure of the Company was not prepared for new adjustments. Their combined efforts stifled the possibilities of an Industrial Revolution in India. Moreover, India, shaken by political changes in the eighteenth century as also by the crippling effects of colonialism, had failed to develop the essential requisites for industrialization. Such capital as she had accumulated was diverted largely to the acquisition of landed estates which guaranteed security, social prestige and local influence. There was no cultivation of science; consequently its application to industry was not possible. Agriculture was too backward to provide a take-off stage for industry. Industries financed by the Agency Houses were export-oriented. The age-old cotton industry succumbed to Lancashire's merciless competition.

What actually followed the abolition of the Company's monopoly was a Commercial Revolution which mainly served the interest of Britain but led inevitably to the economic transformation in India. The purpose of the British private merchants was twofold: to use India as a market for goods pro-

duced in the factories in Britain, and to export from India raw materials for those factories. They operated in India as traders, not as industrialists. The Company, deprived of its commercial rôle, came forward to assist them in developing their activities. 'The Company's rôle as monopolist was converted into that of industrial assistant'.

Among the hindrances to the new commercial activities of the British private traders were lack of capital and a poor system of communications. Capital was supplied by the European Agency Houses. Three Presidency Banks were established in the forties. The transport system was improved by the building of the road from Bombay to Poona (1830) and the construction of the Grand Trunk Road from Calcutta to Delhi which commenced in 1839. Bentinck opened steam navigation on rivers. The most important step was the introduction of Railways for which Dalhousie was responsible. The way was paved for the speedy movement of goods at comparatively low cost as also for the development of jute, cotton, iron and coal industries.

2. TRADE, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Foreign trade, 1813-33

During the years immediately following the Charter Act of 1813 the free traders began to change the structure of India's external trade. Between 1814 and 1818 merchandize imported from England—consisting more and more of metals, woollens and cotton goods—almost quadrupled in value. A reduction of customs duties in Bengal, followed up in Bombay and Madras, helped the importers. In the field of exports, however, the foreign traders found some difficulties. The exchange value of the rupee fell in the twenties. This affected Indo-British trade. A trade depression in England created further difficulties. Trade with European countries such as Portugal and France, with the United States, with China, and with Java was subject to fluctuations.

Indigo became the principal article of export to England, and the Agency Houses made large investments in indigo. Initially they thrived on borrowed capital and on support from the Company's Government. Gradually their investment in some

indigo concerns became uneconomic. The supply of capital was adversely affected by the Anglo-Burmese War, Lord Amherst's policy of debt conversion, and better terms offered by the London Money Market. As a result some of the big Agency Houses became bankrupt. The Agency Houses rested on insecure foundations, 'exposed to every gust of wind, commercial or financial'. Lord William Bentinck tried to rescue the indigo planters by advancing huge loans, but his plan for giving them the right of ownership of land for indigo cultivation was not approved by the Court of Directors.

The banks established by the collapsing Agency Houses shared their fate. The most important of them was the *Calcutta Bank* founded by Palmer & Company; it failed in 1829. In the same year the *Union Bank* was founded as a commercial bank. Managed by commercial men, it aimed at affording facilities to commerce which the *Bank of Bengal*, working under restrictions imposed by the Company's Government, could not provide. Of its twelve Directors four were Indians; one of them was 'Prince' Dwarkanath Tagore, the grandfather of the poet Rabindranath Tagore. The Union Bank made advances to the indigo-planters and shared their over-speculation. Affected by the instability of the indigo industry as also by unwise investment, it failed in 1847. This was a great shock to the financial system: it brought down with it about thirty Agency Houses, including the pioneer Indo-British enterprise, Carr, Tagore & Company organized by Dwarkanath Tagore.

Till 1833 Calcutta was the centre of the greater portion of Indo-British commerce. Bombay dealt mainly with country trade in cotton, trade in Malwa opium with China, and trade in miscellaneous commodities with the Red Sea and Persian Gulf regions.

Foreign trade, 1833-58

India's foreign trade continued primarily with Britain until almost the end of the nineteenth century. The British merchants took advantage of their country's unrivalled maritime supremacy and industrial development as also its political dominion in India. India played the role of a primary producer in relation to the British economy. She supplied food-stuffs and raw materials in return for cotton manufactures, woollen textiles, iron, tin, cutlery, hardware, etc.

Three important changes were made in trade policy after 1833. Duties on internal trade were abolished in Bengal in 1835, and the two other Presidencies followed suit. A new scale of duties was introduced for foreign trade in 1836. A new currency, called the Company's Rupee, was introduced in 1835 with an official exchange rate of 2s.6d.

The importance of Bombay and Madras as ports rose after 1833 although Calcutta retained its predominance. In 1857 the imports of Calcutta and Bombay were about the same. Britain trebled its exports to India between 1854 and 1859. This is explained by large British investments in India in railways, tea gardens and jute manufacture.

The railway age in India had begun; by 1858 277 miles had been completed in the three Presidencies. Railway operations were undertaken by British Companies working under a State guarantee of profits at 5 per cent or $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the outlay.

Increasing commercial operations necessitated the establishment of commercial organizations. As foreign trade was mainly in the hands of the British, the early commercial organizations were necessarily formed by them. The principal non-official organizations connected with trade were the Chambers of Commerce. The Calcutta Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1834. It emerged in a reconstituted form as the Bengal Chamber of Commerce in 1853. The Calcutta Trades Association, representing the retail traders, was founded in 1830.

Industry

'Large-scale industry, based on factory system, came to India as a by-product of British rule'. Its founders were essentially traders, and their efforts produced a commercial—not an industrial—revolution. Machines and machine-made goods were imported from Britain and a few specialized industries were built, but the indigenous small-scale industries were destroyed in that process.

The manufacture of indigo in India began in the eighties of the eighteenth century. There was a boom in the indigo industry in the years following the Napoleonic War. The Bengal Presidency had as many as 899 factories covering 30 to 40 *lakh bighas* of land. There was a crisis in the industry in 1826, but Lord William Bentinck's Government came to its rescue. As there was no economic inducement for the peasants who were

the actual cultivators of indigo, the European planters could work the system only by 'oppression and ill usage'. The resistance of the peasants gathered momentum after 1833, and widespread disturbances, described as the 'Blue Mutiny', broke out in 1859-60. Meanwhile over-speculation had led to a financial crisis which was primarily responsible for the failure of the Union Bank in 1847.

The importance of growing tea in India was realized by the European traders after the abolition of the Company's monopoly of China trade in 1833. Lord William Bentinck took an initiative in the matter. The Assam Company was formed by some London merchants in 1839. Incorporated as a rupee company in 1845, it made some profitable trading in 1856-60.

The first coffee plantation was worked in Bengal by Europeans in the twenties of the nineteenth century. Since the soil of Bengal could not produce good coffee, the industry migrated to the highlands of South India. A coffee boom began in the sixties.

The jute industry, which was started in the last decade of the eighteenth century, was maintained mainly by capital imported from Britain. The trade prospered between 1833 and 1856. The first jute spinning mill was erected at Rishra (near Calcutta) in 1855. The first power-driven looms began to work at Baranagar (near Calcutta) in 1859.

The ruin of the indigenous textile industry was due primarily to three factors: the sumptuary laws passed by the British Parliament in the eighteenth century which closed the British market to Indian products; the protective duties; the improvement of the technique of production in Lancashire which enabled the British mills to produce yarns at cheap rates. Another important factor was the elimination of the French and Dutch competition during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.

The import of extremely cheap Manchester cottons gradually killed the home market for Indian cottons. Bentinck wrote in 1829: 'Cotton piece-goods, for many ages the staple manufacture of India, seem for ever to be lost'. This caused widespread distress, for the ruined handloom weavers could not find alternative employment in mechanized industry which did not develop in India. As a consequence the pressure on land increased. However, some Indian capitalists came forward to

launch an indigenous cotton industry. During the years 1853-61 as many as 13 cotton mills were established in Bombay and Ahmedabad. 'Proximity to the vast cotton tracts of the Deccan, availability of capital, the Parsee tradition of daring entrepreneurship, experience gained in the hereditary cotton trade with China and Africa, and duties levied on British manufacture after the Sepoy Mutiny, combined to spell success for the industry'.

The iron and steel required for the railways, textile mills and principal mechanical appliances used by the planters and the peasantry were imported from Britain. The lack of high-grade iron ore and inadequate production of coal were the principal obstacles to the development of heavy industries in India. Attempts to start iron works in the Barakar-Raniganj area in Bengal in 1839 and in 1855 proved unsuccessful.

3. AGRARIAN SYSTEMS

Permanent Settlement : zamindars

Cornwallis did not intend to create a class of idle and extravagant zamindars. He expected that they would be 'capable of transacting their own business' or 'obliged to dispose of their lands to others who will cultivate and improve them'. He did not anticipate the difficulties which actually confronted them after the introduction of the Permanent Settlement. Many of the zamindari estates were over-assessed. There was habitual irregularity on the part of the peasantry in respect of the payment of rent. The Sale Law which penalized the zamindars for default in payment of revenue was very harsh. As a result the transfer of zamindari lands took place on a large scale during the years immediately following 1793. The purchasers of the estates sold for default did not generally belong to the old land-holding class. They came from heterogeneous groups: unscrupulous servants of zamindars who defrauded or betrayed their masters; men connected in different ways with the Company's *Raj*, such as banians of Englishmen, subordinate revenue farmers, and clerks in Government offices; merchants; lawyers.

The craze for purchase was due to several socio-economic factors. The Indian capitalists were deprived of the opportunity of investing their money in the Company's bonds. Indigenous

banking was on the verge of elimination. The Indian banians were gradually replaced by British agents. The same change occurred in regard to the Company's contracts. As a result many persons with surplus funds seized the opportunity provided by the Permanent Settlement for investment in land. The profit motive was stimulated by the urge to win social distinction. Under the old tradition, which was still a considerable force in rural Bengal, the zamindars were the leaders of rural society.

Many of the old zamindars survived, but some new zamindar families rose into prominence. The new zamindars were generally immune from the profligacy and inefficiency of the old zamindars who were governed by the Mughal tradition. They were usually familiar with the laws and administrative methods of the British rulers. This, as also their experience in other fields, made their management of zamindaris economical. They were normally resident in Calcutta. Absentee landlordism became a regular feature of Bengal's agrarian life. The tenants were exposed to the rapacity and oppression of the zamindars' servants over whom their masters could only exercise ineffective remote control.

Some zamindars who were indolent in their habits and inefficient in the conduct of business sublet portions of their estates to under-renters and under-farmers. Thus developed *patni taluks*, i.e., 'dependent tenures settled in perpetuity at fixed rent'. This system, though opposed to the spirit of the Permanent Settlement, was recognized by law in 1819. Through it there was a wide diffusion of the profits of land, leading speedily to the growth of a middle class connected with land. The Permanent Settlement entered into the economic life of practically every household and transformed the Bengali society.

During the Mughal period large tracts of land in Bengal were *lakhiraj*, i.e., rent-free. With a view to augmenting the financial resources of the Government provision was made by law for resumption of such 'alienated lands' as early as 1793. A strict law for this purpose was made in 1828 because the wars and annexations of Lord Hastings and Lord Amherst depleted the Company's treasury. Resumption was postponed pending the renewal of the Company's Charter. The law, however, added to the zamindars' 'dislike and fear' of the

Government, and their protest marked the beginning of political organization in India. Lord Auckland offered concessions which did not satisfy the Landholders' Society founded in 1838.

In 1837 the European indigo-planters became entitled to hold lands. Some of them acquired landed properties and used their new position to terrorize the indigo-cultivating peasantry. Some zamindars leased their zamindari rights to the planters at excessive rents. The entry of the planters into the zamindars' field increased rural tension in the indigo-districts.

Permanent Settlement: Tenants

Cornwallis made no provision for or against enhancement of rent payable by the ryots. The rising pressure of population on the distribution of agricultural land was a very important factor in rural economy in the early nineteenth century. This pressure was accelerated by the disappearance of rural industries which was due to the Company's commercial policy and the impact of the Industrial Revolution in England on Indian economy. The zamindars, hard pressed by the over-assessment of their estates and the harshness of the Sale Law, took advantage of this situation. As there was much competition for land, and as the rights of the cultivators were undefined by law, they enhanced rent, realized *abwabs* or cesses, and squeezed the peasantry as much as possible. Their claims were generally upheld by judicial interpretation of the laws relating to tenancy.

The tenants were in many cases unwilling or unable to pay rents regularly, and legal action against them was costly and time-consuming. Failure to collect rent regularly from the tenants sometimes compelled the zamindars to default in payment of revenue to the Government. This caused difficulty to the Government. Lord Wellesley considered it necessary to strengthen the authority of the zamindars. For this purpose a Regulation (known as *Haptam*) was passed in 1799. This law, as well as some laws passed in subsequent years, placed at the disposal of the zamindars 'engines of destruction' which they used against the peasantry. To this was added the oppression of the European indigo-planters in certain districts.

During the three decades preceding the passing of the Rent Act of 1859 the Muslim peasants in certain districts and the Santals in the Bengal-Bihar border region resorted to violence in defence of their customary rights. The rising of the indigo-cultivators followed in 1859-60.

The movement organized by Titu Mir collapsed after his death (1831). The Faraizi movement exercised considerable influence on the Muslim peasantry during the pre-'Mutiny' period and survived till the present century.

The Santal insurrection of 1855-56 had no religious or political complexion. It was not a purely agrarian movement. It was a violent protest against the frauds and oppressions to which the simple Santals were exposed by traders and money-lenders. The situation deteriorated when the construction of railways brought in unscrupulous Europeans. The Government took stern measures for the suppression of the rebellion; but important administrative measures, including the creation of a Non-Regulation district called 'Santal Parganas', were taken to improve the administration in the affected area.

The general question of imposing restrictions on the zamindars' right to enhance rent was not seriously considered by the Government for six decades after the introduction of the Permanent Settlement. Probably the Santal insurrection and the growing restlessness among the indigo-cultivators were at least partly responsible for a healthy change in the Government's policy. A Rent Bill, introduced in the Governor-General's Legislative Council in 1857, was delayed by the 'Sepoy Mutiny'. It was finally passed in 1859.

The Rent Act of 1859 provided against the arbitrary exactions of the zamindars, restricted their power of enhancing rent, took away their power of compelling the attendance of their tenants at their offices, and granted the tenants immunity from ejectment from their lands. The principal beneficiaries were the 'occupancy ryots', i.e., ryots who 'had cultivated or held land for a period of twelve years'. Those ryots who did not belong to this category were practically left at the mercy of the zamindars. The Act did not open to the peasantry 'a prospect of freedom and independence'; but it was a decided step towards a new policy and a repudiation of the idea that the zamindars' rights were too sacred to be disturbed by the State. The Permanent Settlement ceased to be looked upon as an immutable contract between the Government and the zamindars.

Ryotwari System in Madras: history

The ryotwari-system introduced by the British rulers in the Madras Presidency was 'a settlement made by the Government immediately with the ryots to the exclusion of intermediaries'.

The Government usually received its dues in the form of a money assessment fixed on the land under cultivation. Assessment varied as the quantity of the produce might vary in each year. This system was entirely different from the Cornwallis system in Bengal under which the Government had no direct contact with the tenant and the proprietary rights of an estate were conferred by the Government on an individual zamindar as a perpetual settlement. The ryotwari system developed as a challenge to the Cornwallis system and ultimately secured much wider acceptance.

The ryotwari system had its origin during the years 1792-99 in Baramahal which was a part of Tipu Sultan's territories acquired by the Company by the treaty of Seringapatam in 1792. It was improvised by a military officer, Alexander Read, who was appointed Collector of the district. It was replaced by the zamindari system after his departure; but in the meanwhile another military officer named Thomas Munro, who was his subordinate, had become a convert to his ideas.

After the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War (1799) Munro was placed in charge of the 'Ceded Districts' which included Bellary, Cuddapah and Karnul. Despite his decided preference for the ryotwari system the Government of Madras introduced the periodical 'village lease' system which was akin to the zamindari system (1807). During the same period the ryotwari system was introduced in Coimbatore, Arcot, Nellore and other districts; but it was finally abandoned in favour of the system of 'village rents'.

After a period of eclipse (1808-1814) the ryotwari system was restored in 1814 throughout the Madras Presidency under orders from the Court of Directors. It developed during the Governorship of Sir Thomas Munro (1820-1827). 'He was the moving spirit behind the restoration and expansion of the system'. His death (1827) was a blow to its development; but it had come to stay, and it was finally recognized to be favourable to the industry and happiness of the people as also to the resources of the Government.

Ryotwari System in Madras : effects.

The primary aims of the ryotwari system were the regular collection of revenue and amelioration of the condition of the ryots. The first aim was realized, but the second remained unfulfilled. It was officially stated that the ryot could not be

ejected so long as he paid the fixed rent, but the assessment was high. Munro advocated a fixity of rental, so that all improvements made by the ryot might add to his own profit. After 1855 the assessment was fixed at the discretion of the revenue officers at each recurring settlement. So the ryot had no fixity of rental, no security against enhancement of rent, no adequate motive for spending labour and money for improvement of land. The volume of agricultural output shrank. There was no rise in the wages of labour. Agricultural indebtedness did not decrease.

The impact of the ryotwari system on the rural society was marginal. The ryot's right to own land and his liberation from the immediate influence of the renter were distinct gains for the peasantry, but the power of the headmen and other leaders of the rural society remained practically unaffected. The privileges attached to certain castes were not touched by the new rights acquired by the ryots. 'In broad terms, the complex pattern of South Indian life was affected but little by the general introduction of the individual settlement'.

The ryotwari system required the building up of an intricate administrative machinery. An important feature of this machinery was the increased employment of Indians in the revenue service. The posts of *Tahsildars* downwards were open to them. Despite the objection of the Court of Directors that too much was left to the 'native servants' Munro insisted that such agency could never be wholly dispensed with.

Mahalwari System

Lord Hastings proposed the introduction of the Permanent Settlement in the 'Ceded and Conquered Provinces', but the Court of Directors overruled him. It was considered better to make settlements with the village communities which had survived in North India. In 1822 the *mahalwari* system was introduced, i.e., settlement was to be made village by village and estate (*mahal*) by estate. The following arrangements were prescribed for the purpose: (1) a cadastral survey of the land; (2) a full record of all landed rights and interests; (3) a moderate assessment of land-revenue; (4) recognition and protection of tenant-right. Five-sixths of the net rental was prescribed as the standard land-revenue. The State-demand was actually raised to over 83 per cent of the rental of estates. In cases in which estates were held not by landlords but by cultivators in

common tenancy, the State-demand might be raised to 95 per cent of the rents. No equitable standard of rents payable by cultivators was prescribed; the matter was left to the judgment of the revenue officers.

'The system broke down by reason of its own harshness'. Lord William Bentinck advocated three general principles: long leases which would give landlords and tenants a motive for improvement; a moderate Government demand which would leave with them some portion of the profits from the soil; preservation of the village communities which were 'little republics having nearly everything that they want within themselves'. In 1833 he passed a Regulation which formed the 'true basis of land settlements in North India'. The Government demand was reduced to two-thirds of the gross rental. The settlements, which took sixteen years (1833-49) to complete, were made for a period of thirty years. This vast operation was carried on by Robert Bird and James Thomason who was Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces from 1843 to 1853.

In the North-Western Provinces the settlement was generally made with village communities in which there was some degree of communal control over land; the members were jointly, as also severally responsible for payment of land-revenue. In many cases the community consisted of only a few persons; sometimes it consisted of only a single individual who had hereditary connection with the farming of land-revenue. The subordinate rights of tenants, who were not members of the community, were recognized. A tenant who could prove twelve years' continuous occupation of his holding was entitled to a permanent and heritable tenure at a judicially fixed rent. This rule was incorporated in the Rent Act of 1859 which was the earliest law defining and protecting tenant-right in Bengal and the North-Western Provinces.

Ryotwari System in Bombay

After the annexation of the Peshwa's dominions (1818) Elphinstone was placed in charge of the administration of the new territories. He submitted to the Governor-General, Lord Hastings, an elaborate and extremely valuable *Report on the Territories Conquered from the Peshwa* (1819). Assuming the Governorship of Bombay in 1819 he directed a general survey and assessment of the whole of the conquered territories. His plan was to combine the principle of the ryotwari system with

the preservation of the village community. But such combination was unpractical; the ryotwari system inevitably affected the vitality of the village community, as the experience of Munro in Madras clearly proved.

After Elphinstone's retirement in 1827 it was found that survey and settlement were 'conducted on untrue and exaggerated estimates of the produce of the soil'. A fresh survey was begun in 1835 by a civil officer named Goldsmid and a military officer named Wingate. On the basis of settlement operations carried on for many years certain principles were laid down in 1847. First, each field was to be assessed separately; holdings or villages were not to be assessed collectively. Secondly, instead of short leases it was desirable to grant long leases for thirty years. Thirdly, the basis of assessment should be the estimated value of the land, not the estimated produce of the land.

These principles became the basis of the Bombay land-revenue system. The transferable and heritable right of the cultivator to his land was recognized, but his ancient right to a fixed land-tax was swept away. No limit to the State demand was prescribed. The total district demand was determined from the past history of the district and the past condition of the people. This demand was then distributed among the fields according to their relative values on an estimate of the depth and nature of the soil in each field. The cultivator had no voice in the settlement of the land-tax by the revenue officer; he was called upon, after the demand was settled, to pay it or to quit his ancestral land. 'No system could be devised better calculated to keep an agricultural people permanently poor and resourceless than the system which left to the revenue officials the absolute and unrestricted power to increase the revenue demand at each recurring settlement'.

Changes in village life

The condition of the peasantry was affected by several factors. First, there was a steady increase in population 'due to the establishment of peaceful condition amongst a people used to war, and possessing high natural fertility'. This led to increasing pressure on land, which was accelerated by the ruin of cottage industries resulting from the growing import of British manufactures. The average size of the holdings was reduced. Fragmentation was promoted by the inheritance laws of the Hindus and the Muslims. Most peasants became dependent

on money-lenders who came to occupy an important position in rural society.

Secondly, the revenue systems pressed heavily on the peasantry. In the areas covered by the Permanent Settlement the peasants had practically no safeguard against arbitrary increase of rent by the zamindars, for the law was obscure and litigation was costly. In the ryotwari regions the peasantry suffered for other causes. 'Much suffering was caused, both in Madras and Bombay, by the heavy assessments imposed during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, when the Government was striving to meet war expenses from revenue, and their staff was untrained, and sometimes was also corrupt'. In the Punjab the British assessments were lower than the previous Sikh demands, but 'cash payments and rigidity of collection largely set off the advantage to the cultivator'.

Thirdly, the introduction of sophisticated law, the establishment of regular law courts, the improvement of communications, the increasing flow of British goods, etc., exposed the rural areas to steadily increasing interference from outside. The net results were the gradual disappearance of economic self-sufficiency and 'the gradual transfer of authority within the village from the village elders to agents of Government'. The *panchayats* had for many centuries been—in the words of Metcalfe—'little Republics, having nearly everything they want within themselves, and almost independent of any foreign relations'. Their existence was incompatible with the British system of administration and the new economic forces released by British rule. Their gradual disappearance led to a radical socio-economic transformation of rural life.

THE 'SEPOY MUTINY'

1. BACKGROUND

Local risings and civil disturbances

The 'Sepoy Mutiny' of 1857, which practically shook the British Empire in India to its very foundations, was not a bolt from the blue. For a hundred years since the battle of Plassey the British rulers had been called upon to deal with a series of local risings and civil disturbances in different parts of India. Moreover, the mutiny of troops was not a rare occurrence in the history of British rule in India. The novelty of the 'Mutiny' of 1857 lay in the wide extent of the area which it covered and in its military potentiality.

Armed resistance and civil disturbances were due to different causes and took different forms. The general cause was the overthrow of the old political order which affected not only the princely families but also the feudal aristocracies, the dispersed soldiers and the common people. The displaced rulers and feudal lords tried to recover the lost ground; in some cases they were supported by the people. The revenue systems, laws and administrative institutions introduced by the British rulers caused widespread dislocation in the annexed territories. Some reaction from the affected interests was natural. Some authorities consider the 'Mutiny' of 1857 as the last and most serious bid for recovery of their property and privileges by dispossessed princes and landlords. The risings of the Rajas of Vizianagram and the *poligars* of Karnul, the Ramosi risings in Maharashtra led by local chiefs, the rebellion of Velu Tampi in Travancore, the insurrection of Wazir Ali in Oudh, etc., indicate a continuous trend which reached its culmination in the leadership of Nana Saheb and Lakshmi Bai in the 'Mutiny' of 1857.

Another aspect of violent protest against British rule is found in tribal risings. Reference may be made to the risings of the Chuars of the Jungle Mahals in Bengal, the Hos and Kols and Mundas of Bihar, the Santals of Bengal, the Khonds of Orissa, the Khasis of Assam, the Bhils of Gujarat, etc. These

were generally due to the harsh administrative practices of the British rulers and the economic exploitation of landlords, merchants and money-lenders who entered the tribal areas along with them. In such cases the feudal and exploiting agencies were auxiliaries of the foreign rulers. The unsophisticated tribals were more easily amenable to exploitation, and less capable of making adjustments with the new order, than the villagers in the regularly administered areas.

There were religio-political risings and disturbances as well. The Sannyasi and Faqir rebellion in Bengal during the early years of British rule, the Wahabi movement, the rising of Titu Mir and the Faraizi movement in Bengal, etc., belong to this category.

There are some examples of mass agitation in protest against specific economic grievances. To this category belong movements in Surat (1844, 1848) against the raising of salt duty as also the introduction of new weights and measures and the rising among the cultivators of Khandesh (1852) for relief in agrarian distress. The indigo disturbances in Bengal gathered momentum before the 'Mutiny' of 1857.

The British rulers were strong enough to suppress all local risings and civil disturbances, and there was no immediate impact on the stability of their power. But the simmering discontent of different classes testifies to the oppressive character and inherent weakness of the British imperial system. The rebels and agitators 'helped to maintain the spirit of freedom and defiance smouldering, seeking a breeze to spark into conflagration'. The 'breeze' was provided in 1857 by the discontent of the sepoys—the only armed section of the unarmed subject population.

Grievances of sepoys

The sepoys who served the Company loyally in conquering the country and holding it in subjection had grievances which led to small explosions from time to time.

The Company's army was composed of two sections—one in which both officers and rank and file were Europeans, and the other in which the commissioned officers were Europeans, but the junior officers and the rank and file were Indians. In 1857 the total military strength of the Company was 238,000 of whom only 38,000 were Europeans. The armies of the three Presidencies were separately organized; each of them had its

own Commander-in-Chief. The Bengal Army was under the direct control of the Government of India. It numbered 151,000 of whom nearly 23,000 were Europeans. The Madras and Bombay Armies were under the direct control of the Local Government concerned.

The Bengal Army was not recruited in Bengal, but in the North-Western Provinces, Oudh and certain States. Oudh contributed a very large proportion. Unlike the armies of Madras and Bombay, the Bengal Army contained a large number of high-caste men—Brahmins and Rajputs—whom it was difficult to control. They were subject to all caste prejudices which were too strong to be levelled down by Western ideas about discipline. Sir Charles Napier observed: 'High caste, that is to say, Mutiny, is encouraged'. Apart from caste, the recruits to the Bengal Army, coming from the same geographical area and social group, were united by something like a close family tie. In the Madras Army, which was comparatively free from caste prejudices, there was no mutiny since that at Vellore in 1806. But in the Bengal Army four mutinies had occurred (1844, 1849, 1850, 1852) during the thirteen years preceding 1857.

Bentinck described the Bengal Army as 'the most expensive and inefficient in the world'. The inefficiency of the Bengal Army was not due simply to caste prejudices. Laxity of discipline was indirectly promoted by bad leadership. First, many able military officers were transferred to political duty and replaced by less competent substitutes. Secondly, promotion being regulated strictly by seniority, many incompetent officers rose to high places. Thirdly, there was no strict age limit, and officers who had outlived their physical capacity to serve were allowed to remain in active service.

The sepoys always resented their low scale of pay and poor prospects of promotion. 'Though he might give signs of the military genius of a Haidar Ali', a sepoy could 'never attain the pay of an English subaltern'. Moreover, the European troops 'took no share in the rough ordinary duties of the service', and they were 'lodged, fed, and paid in a manner unknown to other soldiers'. Such discrimination adversely affected the sepoys' morale.

An experienced British officer wrote in 1857: 'Almost all the mutinies in India, whether in Bengal or elsewhere, have been more or less produced by, or at least have had in some sort the initiative from, ourselves. There has usually been some depar-

ture from contract, some disregard of the feelings, health or convenience of the native soldiers, when at the same moment the utmost care was lavished on a European regiment; some tampering with their religious views and prejudices; some interference with their pay or rights, or what they supposed to be their rights'.

Campaigns in strange lands outside the boundaries of India—Burma, Afghanistan, Persia, China—were very unpopular with the sepoys, for these inflicted on them great hardships and put a strain on their social usages and religious feelings. There was a mutiny of sepoys at Barrackpur (near Calcutta) in 1824 in connection with their journey to Burma. Symptoms of disaffection were noticed among the sepoys in 1839 when they were taken to Afghanistan.

The British Government took two steps to meet such difficulties. It began to build up a new army drawn mainly from Sikhs, Punjabi Muslims and Gurkhas. Secondly, under the General Service Enlistment Act introduced by Lord Canning (1856) all future recruits had to undertake to march wherever ordered. These measures undermined the privileged position of the North Indian sepoys in the Bengal Army.

Apart from general grievances, the 'Mutiny' of 1857 was precipitated by several factors. First, the General Service Enlistment Act (which made it compulsory for all recruits to cross the seas whenever ordered to do so) and the introduction of the new Enfield rifle appeared to the sepoys as direct onslaughts on their religion. The use of this rifle entailed the biting of a greased cartridge, and they believed that the grease was made from cow or pig fat. This matter affected not only the caste-ridden Hindus but also the Muslims in the army. Secondly, the annexation of Oudh excited those sepoys who came from the Nawab's territory. They had some sympathy for the ruling house, and many of them enjoyed petty privileges under it which were not recognized by the new British rulers. Thirdly, Thomason's heavy land assessments adversely affected those sepoys who came from the North-Western Provinces. Normally their income from military service was supplemented by income drawn from land. Higher land-revenue, therefore, lowered their total income. Fourthly, the Bengal Army, formed at the early stage of the Company's rise to political power, had exaggerated ideas of its own importance. It resented the entry of Sikhs, Punjabi Muslims and Gurkhas which encroached upon the monopoly

of men from Oudh and the North-Western Provinces and restricted their scope of employment.

In 1857 there was an important factor contributing to the Bengal Army's 'consciousness of power'. About 13,000 of its total strength of 23,000 European troops were stationed in the Punjab. Between Calcutta and Meerut the only British regiment was at Danapore (near Patna). No European regiment was stationed in Delhi or in newly annexed Oudh. Many points of strategic importance and most of the guns were under the control of the sepoys. European troops had been withdrawn for the Crimean and Persian Wars. Dalhousie pointed out the necessity of maintaining an adequate proportion of British troops in India, but no attention was paid to his warning. On the whole, the military importance of the sepoys was increasing along with their professional discontent.

Policy of annexation

Dalhousie's annexations disturbed the political equilibrium in the country and created widespread discontent in extensive regions. The overthrow of the Nawab of Oudh and the proposal to remove the titular Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah II from his ancestral palace in Delhi came as shocks to the Muslims. The annexation of several Hindu principalities and the forfeiture of the ex-Peshwa's pension created alarm among the Hindus. Even Hindu and Muslim princes who remained unaffected by the policy of annexation began to suffer from a vague feeling of uneasiness lest they should suffer a similar fate in future. This uneasiness was shared by their employees and dependents.

The annexation of Princely States was not a blow to the princely families alone. Families dependent upon the favour of the princes, officers who earned their bread by service in the States, men who composed the inefficient militia of the princes—all these were rudely disturbed by a feeling of sullen resentment against the British intruders. The administration of Coverly Jackson, whom Canning appointed as Chief Commissioner of Oudh in 1856, proved so exasperating to the dependents of the ex-Nawab that he had to be replaced by Sir Henry Lawrence.

General uneasiness

It is too much to say that the country was 'ripe for rebellion'

in 1857. But 'the minds of the civil population of all classes and ranks, Hindus and Muslims, princes and people, were agitated and disturbed by feelings of uneasiness and vague apprehension'. This was due primarily to the disturbance of material interests caused by the ruin of industries, oppressive agrarian systems and the ramifications of a costly and sophisticated system of administration. To this were added vague apprehensions about the future of religious beliefs and social customs. The abolition of religious practices like *Sati* and infanticide, the legalization of widow remarriage, the aggressive activities of missionaries like Alexander Duff, the spread of Western education, the introduction of female education, the construction of railways which indirectly affected the caste prejudices of the passengers—these were almost universally looked upon by the people as clever attempts to destroy Hinduism and Islam and to make this country a Christian land. Century-old religious practices and dearly valued social customs were thought to be unsafe under British rule.

'Only a small educated minority in the Presidency towns welcomed the social legislation of the British and the introduction of Western education'. But even this microscopic section of the people could not extend full support to official policies. The educated class resented the racial arrogance of the ruling race which enjoyed privileges not only in society but also in the law courts. Sir Syed Ahmad observed that the British officials' 'pride and arrogance led them to consider the natives of India as undeserving the name of human beings'. Offence to sentiment was reinforced by denial of material rights. There were complaints about the systematic exclusion of Indians from superior and lucrative official employment. The highest office to which an Indian could aspire was that of a Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector in the executive, and of a Sadar Amin in the judicial, branch of the administration. The assurance given by the British Parliament regarding employment in the Company's service irrespective of caste, colour and creed was not implemented. There was no provision for participation in the making of laws by which their lives and properties were governed. A wide gulf separated the ruling class and the Government from the people—not only the illiterate mass but also the educated class.

2. MILITARY OPERATIONS

Berhampore to Delhi

Lord Canning succeeded Lord Dalhousie in February 1856. Before starting for India he observed in his farewell speech in London that although the sky in India was 'serene', yet 'a small cloud might arise, at first no bigger than a man's hand, but which, growing larger and larger, may at last threaten to burst and overwhelm us with ruin'. The prophecy was soon found to be a correct one.

The incredible disregard of the solidiers' religious prejudices was the immediate cause of insubordination which drifted to armed rebellion. Soon after the issue of the greased cartridges the sepoys at Berhampore, about 120 miles from Calcutta, refused to receive their percussion caps for parade (26 February 1857). Next day they fell in parade, but the Government of India resolved to disband them. A month later (29 March 1857) a sepoy named Mangal Pandey at Barrackpur fired at the sergeant-major. He was tried and executed; the regiment was disbanded. Reports of these incidents, fomented the discontent and mutinous spirit which had affected the sepoys of the Bengal Army located at different stations. There were acts of incendiarism at Ambala. At Lucknow a report that the sepoys intended to murder the officers led to their disbandment. The story of the greased cartridges 'became an article of faith with nine-tenths of the sepoys of Northern India'. *Chapatis* (pieces of small unleavened bread) were passed on from village to village over an extensive area. Nothing definite was known about either the object of the circulation of the *chapatis* or the source from which the idea originated. Even if this was designed by some as a signal for a large-scale outbreak, it was most probably not understood by the people as such.

At Meerut, which had 'the strongest European force at any post in the North-Western Provinces', the degradation and punishment of some sepoys for refusal to touch the cartridges served as a provocation. Three sepoy regiments shot officers, broke open the gaol, and after releasing their imprisoned companions, set out with their arms to Delhi (10 May 1857). Reaching the old imperial capital (11 May 1857) they persuaded the nominal Emperor Bahadur Shah II to agree to be proclaimed Emperor, occupied the city and

massacred the Europeans who were taken completely unawares.

The occupation of Delhi was an excellent opening of the 'Mutiny'. Although the great magazine, with its vast store of ammunition, was blown up by the British officers to prevent its seizure by the sepoys, the strongly fortified walls of the city offered protection and security to the mutineers. Moreover, 'the prestige of the Imperial House of the Timurids served as a symbol for rallying heterogenous elements round a common banner'. The British naturally regarded the recapture of Delhi as their most immediate and important objective.

Oudh and North-Western Provinces

During the months of May and June (1857) a series of mutinies followed in Oudh and the North-Western Provinces at centres such as Aligarh, Etawa, Mainpuri, Rurki, Etah, Mathura, Lucknow, Bareilly, Shahjahanpur, Moradabad, Budaun, Azamgarh, Sitapur, Benares, Kanpur, Jhansi, Allahabad, Fyzabad, and Fatehpur. The mutineers followed the pattern set by Meerut. They killed European military officers and civilians, sparing neither women nor children in many cases, burnt Government offices, plundered the treasury, and released the prisoners from jails. Many of them enriched themselves by indiscriminate plunder of Europeans and Indians alike. There was hardly any resistance to them, except at Lucknow and Kanpur. For several reasons the British position in Northern India was quite precarious. Anson, the Commander-in-Chief, and his staff were isolated at Simla. The number of available European troops was small, and they were not mobilised. Neither transport nor supplies were ready for operational purposes. Roads were few and primitive. There were only 120 miles of railway from Calcutta to Raniganj. The only helpful factor was the linking up of the chief cities and garrison towns by telegraph lines. The sepoys later realized that these were 'the strings that hanged us', but these were never systematically cut.

The leader of the rising at Kanpur (June 1857) was Nana Sahib, the adopted son of the ex-Peshwa Baji Rao II who had been living at Bithur (near Kanpur) since his banishment from Poona. He was not allowed by the British Government

to inherit his adoptive father's pension; but he showed no sign of resentment and maintained friendly relations with the local British officials. When and why he joined the mutineers are questions which cannot be satisfactorily answered. There is some evidence of doubtful authenticity indicating that he had been in secret league with the sepoys before the outbreak of the 'Mutiny'. Another version is that his position was not unlike that of Bahadur Shah II who reluctantly joined the mutineers: he was raised to nominal leadership by the sepoys, but they did not obey his orders.

A hastily constructed entrenchment sheltered the British community at Kanpur and served as a centre of resistance to the sepoys whom Nana Saheb joined on 5 June 1857. The sepoys' assault on the 'flimsy defence' failed; but after three weeks' struggle General Wheeler surrendered. An agreement was signed on 26 June; it provided that the entrenchment would be evacuated, and boats with food supply would be provided by Nana Saheb for taking the besieged to Allahabad. When the Europeans got into the boats kept ready for them at *Sati Chaura Ghat* they were fired upon by the sepoys. Whether this massacre was pre-planned is not certain, Nana Saheb's responsibility for this treacherous act is a controversial question. However, he was proclaimed Peshwa immediately afterwards (30 June 1857). He issued vainglorious proclamations and despatched royal orders to chiefs and officials.

Delhi, Kanpur and Lucknow were the principal centres of the 'Mutiny'. Sir Henry Lawrence, who was in charge of the local army at Lucknow, improved the defences of the Residency buildings where all Europeans were concentrated for safety. The siege of Lucknow by the sepoys—perhaps the most amazing episode in the whole military history of the Mutiny—began on 30 June 1857. The British force consisted of about 1,700 men—British soldiers and civilians as also loyal sepoys. The siege was conducted by 6,000 trained sepoys, who were reinforced by Talukdars' retainers; the number finally reached 100,000 or perhaps even more. They were inspired by the presence of the Begam of Oudh and Maulvi Ahmadullah who were 'leading spirits in the resistance against the British'. Lawrence was killed early in July; but the Residency could not be captured. Lucknow, however, remained in the grip of the besiegers till March 1858. The long siege of Lucknow contributed indirectly—but effectively—to the final victory of

the British as it kept back about 100,000 rebel fighters from participating in fighting in other theatres of war.

In the region south of the Jumna the chief centre of the 'Mutiny' was Jhansi. There was a massacre of Europeans in June 1857; but it is extremely doubtful whether it was instigated by Lakshmi Bai, the widow of the ruler of the Jhansi State which had been annexed by Dalhousie under the 'Doctrine of Lapse'. After this incident she was appointed by the British Commissioner to carry on the administration of the State in the name of the British Government. But the Government of India suspected her of complicity in the incident and issued instructions to collect evidence of her guilt. At this stage she decided to resort to armed resistance to the British.

Other provinces

'If British rule in the Punjab had collapsed, as it had done in the North-West Provinces, nothing could have prevented the British troops in Delhi from being isolated, and probably the whole of Northern India would have been submerged'. But there was no serious rising in the Punjab, for as soon as the news of Meerut and Delhi reached Lahore, the sepoys were disarmed throughout the province. Moreover, levies of turbulent frontier Pathans were raised. 'The sepoys had gone to Lahore, Multan, Peshawar and Bannu as the instrument of the British imperial policy. The table was now turned on them, and the Punjabi Muslim and the Sikh, the tribesmen of Kohat and the Yusufzai country were united against the Hindustanis, Muslims and non-Muslims, by the common hatred they bore against them'.

In Central India risings took place at Gwalior, Indore, Mhow and Dhar, as also in several places in the Sagar and Narmada Territories. In Rajasthan there were risings at Nasirabad, Nimach and Kota. Attempts at mutiny failed at Ahmedabad in Gujarat and Hyderabad in Sind. There was an outbreak at Karachi. In the Deccan there was no actual outbreak except at Kolhapur. No serious trouble occurred in the Madras Presidency.

In Bihar the most important military station was Danapore which commanded the land and river routes from Calcutta to Northern India. There, as also at some other places (Gaya, Hazaribagh, Sambalpur), the sepoys mutinied. In Arrah the leadership of Kunwar Singh, a Rajput zamindar,

converted the 'Mutiny' into a civil rebellion. In Bengal there were only two sporadic outbursts—at Dacca, and at Chittagong.

Civil rebellion

In Rohilkhand and Oudh, as also in the Arrah region in Bihar, the military revolt merged into a general rising of the civil population. This was due, in general, to the accumulated grievances of the people; but there were special causes in operation in different regions. Agrarian grievances, for instance, were the most important factor in the Doab. The feudal classes thought of recovering lost privileges, or of acquiring new lands. Peasants thought of killing the oppressive landlords and money-lenders as also of freeing themselves of debts by destroying bonds deposited with their creditors. Sometimes there was the desire to take advantage of the collapse of administration in order to pay off old scores against enemies. The motive of plunder in a climate of lawlessness was hardly less important. Many men joined the disturbances in order to 'feed fat the ancient grudge' against the hated *Feringhees*. Some Muslim leaders and *maulvis* aimed at restoring Muslim rule in India; they were encouraged by the restoration of Bahadur Shah II in Delhi. Maulvi Ahmadullah of Fyzabad, who came from Arcot in the Madras Presidency, preached *jihad* (holy war) against the British at different places in Northern India. The 'Gorakhpur *maulvi*', Sarfaraz Ali, is recorded to have delivered an inflammatory speech at Shahjahanpur on 1 May 1857.

The 'upsurge of the people' generally followed the breakdown of local authority as a result of military revolt. The success of the mutineers created conditions which encouraged the civil population to seek the fulfilment of their diverse objectives by violent means. 'The people's revolt was the effect, not the cause, of the Mutiny'. At Mazaffarnagar, and at Saharanpur, the lawless elements indulged in riots when they heard the news of Meerut even before the local sepoys had actually mutinied. At Bulandshahr 'mixed crowds of rebel forces, Gujar villagers and townsmen took part in wanton destruction of civil and military establishments'.

In Rohilkhand, as in Delhi, the British authority entirely disappeared; all British civil and military officers were either

killed or compelled to save themselves by flight. The sepoys mutinied on 31 May 1857 at Bareilly which became the centre of the rebellion in the region. Its leader was Khan Bahadur Khan, a grandson of Hafiz Rahmat Khan, the famous Rohilla chief of the time of Warren Hastings. He assumed charge of administration as Nawab Nazim on behalf of the Emperor of Delhi. Other important centres were Farrukhabad and Bijnor. Here, as in Bareilly, local chiefs established their authority. While acknowledging the nominal suzerainty of Delhi they practically exercised independent power. Similar developments took place at Moradabad and Shahjahanpur. The Rohilla Nawab of Rampur remained loyal to the British cause.

'Popular upsurge' occurred in Budaun, Aligarh, Mathura, Agra, Banda, Hamirpur, and Jhansi. Some parts of Bundelkhand, as also of the Sagar and Narmada Territories, were affected.

In Oudh the popular rising had a rallying point in the Nawab family which had been displaced by Dalhousie in 1856. The cause of the Nawab—an exile in Calcutta—was taken up by his Begam, Hazrat Mahal. It was supported by the rich and influential Talukdars, many of whom had lost their property, as also by the common people who had to pay various taxes in addition to heavy land-revenue. Many of the sepoys disbanded by the British authorities in connection with the agitation against greased cartridges belonged to Oudh. 'Nowhere else, outside Oudh, were the mutinies of sepoys so successful and widespread, and nowhere else did they lead to outbreaks of civil population on such a large scale'.

After the mutiny in Lucknow (May 1857) rising became general throughout Oudh. 'The mutiny of a regiment was invariably followed by the loss of the district concerned to the British authorities, and within less than two weeks British administration in Oudh 'vanished like a dream'. The Talukdars, whose estates had been taken over by the British authorities and sold to others by auction, recovered their possessions by force. Their military strength can be estimated from the fact that in course of the suppression of the outbreak 1,572 forts were destroyed and 714 cannon, exclusive of those taken in action, were surrendered. All classes of people, including the peasants whom the British had protected against the rapacity of the Talukdars, joined the rising.

Begam Hazrat Mahal installed her minor son Birjis Quadr as Nawab (July 1857) and a regular administration was set up. A number of local chiefs established petty principalities and functioned independently. Among them there were Muslims as also Hindus, the most important being Mir Muhammad Hasan of Gorakhpur. Their main purpose was the recovery of their landed properties and the acquisition of new lands; they were also interested in the preservation of their respective religions. They professed allegiance to the Nawab, but they did not rally round the Begam and unreservedly place their resources at her disposal.

Many of the retainers of the landlords assembled in Lucknow in support of the sepoys, but they themselves did not play any important part in the struggle at the capital. They fought bravely when the tide turned in favour of the British; at that stage their objective was to retain the lands and privileges which they had secured rather than to gain freedom for Oudh, not to speak of the whole of India.

Kunwar Singh, who held extensive estates in the Arrah region in Bihar, was suspected of involvement in an anti-British plot in 1846 at Patna. There is some indication that he was preparing the ground for a rising in the pre-'Mutiny' years. However, he was actually driven into rebellion in July 1857 by 'the short-sightedness of the British Government'. He assumed the leadership of the rebel sepoys of Danapore. The rebellious spirit affected the civil population in the districts of Sahabad and Gaya. There were tribal insurrections in Chota Nagpur.

Suppression of the 'Mutiny'

The mutineers failed to make good use of their numerical superiority and their success in Delhi, Rohilkhand and Oudh. They should have ensured the security of Delhi as their base of operations by preventing the British advance from the Punjab. To this defensive strategy on the west they should have added offensive strategy on the east: they should have marched to Calcutta, the chief citadel of British power in India. 'They might have swept down the valley of the Ganges, seized Allahabad, Benares and Patna, and, gathering strength on their way till their numbers had become irresistible, destroyed every trace of European civilization and massacred every European till they had reached the frontiers of Eastern Bengal'.

While the sepoys ignored the logic of military compulsion, Canning took prompt steps. He ordered John Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab, to send down every available European and Sikh soldier from his province to Delhi. In the east he concentrated all the available forces from Bombay, Madras and Pegu (in Burma) in Calcutta. He asked the British Expeditionary Force proceeding to China to divert its course to Calcutta. He requested the Governor of Ceylon to send him as many troops as possible.

Colonel James Neill was entrusted with the task of securing Benares and Allahabad, and relieving Kanpur. He disarmed the sepoys at Benares and suppressed a rising there (June 1857). There was a rising at Allahabad; Neill suppressed it (June 1857). But for his delay at Allahabad the *Sati Chaura Ghat* tragedy at Kanpur would not have happened.

A movable column was formed at Allahabad under the command of Henry Havelock 'for the relief of Lucknow and Kanpur and the destruction of all mutineers and insurgents in North-Western India'. His march to Kanpur as also his victories over Nana Sahib's troops indicated his brilliant strategy as also the rebel leader's military inefficiency. After a rout in the battlefield (July 1857) Nana Sahib fled and his troops melted away. After occupying Kanpur Havelock proceeded to Lucknow (September 1857). Nana Sahib's able and devoted lieutenant Tantia Topi recovered possession of Kanpur (November 1857). Defeated by the British Commander-in-Chief, Sir Colin Campbell, in the last battle fought for Kanpur (December 1857), he fell back upon Kalpi.

Meanwhile Delhi had been recovered after a series of operations (September 1857). The moving spirit at the last stage was Nicholson who brought reinforcements from the Punjab. Bahadur Shah II surrendered. The relief of Lucknow now became the principal military objective of the British. Havelock failed; he was superseded by Outram. At the final stage the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Colin Campbell, took charge and equipped a powerful army which was joined by Gurkha troops under Jang Bahadur.

After the fall of Lucknow (March 1858) no serious attempt was made by Campbell to pursue and cut off the mutineers who left the city, dispersed in different directions, and continued resistance under different leaders. Among them

the most important were Begam Hazrat Mahal and Maulvi Ahmadullah. The final reduction of Oudh followed the recovery of Rohilkhand where Khan Bahadur Khan and Maulvi Ahmadullah made their last bid to halt the *Feringhees* (May-June 1858). In Oudh the brunt of the British attack fell upon the Talukdars; the struggle continued till the end of 1858.

Central India was the scene of operations of Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi and Tantia Topi; Kunwar Singh and the Nawab of Banda also participated in them. Sir Hugh Rose commanded the British troops. The Rani and Tantia Topi, severely defeated at Kalpi (May 1858), reached Gwalior and occupied the fort despite resistance from Sindhia. They had won over Sindhia's army by secret negotiations. Three weeks later (June 1858) Rose recovered Gwalior. During the siege the Rani, 'clad in the attire of a man and mounted on horseback', animated her troops and finally courted death. Tantia, pursued by the British, moved through Central India, Rajasthan and Berar till he was captured. This ended the 'Mutiny' in Central India.

Kunwar Singh, driven away from Bihar, proceeded to Central India, where he fought along with the mutineers. Then he returned to his own village in Bihar through the eastern part of the North-West Provinces, fought with British troops and died of his wounds (May 1858). His brother Amar Singh continued guerilla operations for several months.

The fate of the principal leaders of the 'Mutiny' deserves notice. Lakshmi Bai and Kunwar Singh escaped the vengeance of the victors, the former dying in the field and the latter dying of wounds. Bahadur Shah was tried by a court martial for rebellion and complicity in the murder of Europeans, found guilty, and sentenced to imprisonment for life. He was exiled to Rangoon, where he died in 1862. Nana Saheb fled to Nepal; so did Begam Hazrat Mahal. Tantia Topi was hanged (April 1859). Maulvi Ahmadullah was killed in an armed encounter with a pro-British Raja near Shahjahanpur (June 1858).

Atrocities

During the 'Mutiny' atrocities were committed on both sides. As these promoted racial feelings and had a long-term impact on political development it is not possible to dismiss them as a passing phase of military operations.

For the indiscriminate massacre of the English at Meerut in which not even women and children were spared, not only the sepoys but also the prisoners in gaols released by them and the anti-social elements in the city were responsible. The march of the sepoys was a signal for general disorder, and many people, who had no connection with them and little understanding of their objectives, took full advantage of lawlessness. The bloody scenes enacted at Meerut were repeated in Delhi. Murders of Europeans took place in other places, such as Jhansi, Allahabad and Bareilly. The most notorious case was the massacre of the English women and children at Kanpur; but it was not a planned operation. It was probably 'due to a panic, or to a desire on the part of Nana Saheb's retinue to compromise their half-hearted leader'. Moreover, it 'followed and was probably inspired by the savage punishments inflicted by the British at Benares and Allahabad'.

The British provocation which preceded the atrocities at Kanpur went unnoticed, but these created 'the widespread belief in British circles that one European life, especially that of a woman or child, is worth the life of innumerable Indians'. No act of savagery on the part of the English commanders and troops shocked either the higher authorities in India or public opinion in England. Terrible atrocities were perpetrated on townsmen—particularly in Kanpur, Delhi and Jhansi—as also on people in the countryside.

The immediate effect of 'indiscriminate hanging' and 'the general burning and plunder of villages' was, as the Government of India noted in December 1857, to 'deeply exasperate large communities not otherwise hostile to the Government'. The civil rebellion was partly due to this exasperation. Canning's half-hearted measures to restrain clamours for vengeance brought to him from the Europeans the derisive sobriquet 'Clemency Canning'. The echoes of the 'Mutiny' were heard for many years; bitter memories survived on both sides and strained the relations between the rulers and the ruled. The Indian masses remembered their sufferings, and the educated classes resented the racial arrogance of the whites which humiliated them in post-'Mutiny' years. The Englishmen, on their part, continued to think of the Indians in the light of their atrocities upon white women and children during the 'Mutiny'.

3. GENERAL SURVEY

Causes of the 'Mutiny'

There was widespread discontent in the country, and practically every class had grievances against the British rulers; but it is unlikely that any dissident group would have actually risen in revolt without a lead from the Company's sepoys. Even in Oudh, where there were about 80,000 men of the Nawab's disbanded army and the powerful Talukdars resented the imposition of British rule, there was no revolt before the occupation of Meerut and Delhi by the Company's mutinous troops. The latter had substantial grievances about their conditions of service, but it was the threat to their religion which actually provoked them into 'mutiny'. 'The dread of conversion to Christianity worked as a nightmare upon their minds'. Had there been no greased cartridge, it is doubtful if a general revolt would have broken out for redress of the other accumulating grievances.

At the initial stage at any rate, the sepoys were not animated by any patriotic feeling or nationalist sentiment. They were moved by a 'blind fury' against the *Feringhees* who threatened their caste and religious faith. 'All the contemporary Indian writers, without any exception, represented the sepoys as the enemies of the people, and not as patriotic fighters for their country's freedom'. The cry for the expulsion of the *Feringhees* and the march to Delhi led them to an almost spontaneous bid for the recovery of Mughal rule. The Muslims nourished a deep-rooted grievance against the British who had supplanted the Mughals. For the Hindus indigenous rule meant Mughal rule. The political stroke was ancillary to the hatred of the *Feringhees*.

The 'Mutiny' was not preceded by any organized conspiracy on the part of the sepoys with a definite political purpose. The meaning of the *chapatis* remains a mystery. Probably there were secret discussions among the leading sepoys, as also exchange of letters between sepoys of various cantonments. But there is no evidence to show that a concerted revolt was actually organized, or even planned. There was no simultaneous rising of the sepoys at different cantonments on a particular date; on the other hand, the sepoys at several stations were loyal or hesitant for some time and finally joined

the rebels under pressure or sudden impulse. It is true that sepoys over an extensive area broke into mutiny within several weeks. This was probably due to the incentive provided by the successes achieved by the rebels at Meerut and in Delhi rather than to organization and planning.

According to Malleſon, a leading British historian of the 'Mutiny', there was a conspiracy; the conspirators were Maulvi Ahmadullah, Nana Saheb and the Rani of Jhansi who had carried on negotiations before the outbreak. A detailed study of the circumstances under which Bahadur Shah, Nana Saheb, the Rani of Jhansi and Kunwar Singh joined the sepoys does not justify this view. They were really forced by the pressure of events to cast their lot with the mutineers.

The puppet Mughal Emperor wrote a letter to the Shah of Persia, and copies of a proclamation in the name of the latter (in which there was no mention of Bahadur Shah) were put up on the walls in Delhi. The Government of India had been at war with Persia until May 1856. Some people in Delhi believed that a Persian invasion of India, backed by Russia, was imminent. These isolated facts do not prove that there was any serious contact between Delhi and Persia.

If there had been no 'mutiny' of the sepoys, or if the mutineers had failed to achieve successes at the initial stage, there would have been no outbreak of the civil population. Thus the military revolt was the direct and proximate cause of the civil rebellion. The civil population had many grievances, but a general revolt on the part of the unarmed masses was not a possibility. Stage by stage 'the passive discontent of the people was transformed to active rebellion'. In this process the 'mutiny' of the sepoys served as the catalyst.

Bishop Heber wrote in 1824: 'If a fair opportunity be offered, the Musalmans, more particularly, would gladly avail themselves of it to rise against us'. The general British idea during the 'Mutiny', as also during the years following it, was that it was mainly a Muslim rising and its primary aim was the restoration of the Mughal Empire. Much importance was attached to the Wahabi movement. The proclamation of Bahadur Shah as Emperor, and the temporary restoration of Muslim rule in Rohilkhand and Oudh, seemed to emphasize the predominantly Muslim character of the 'Mutiny'. After the 'Mutiny' Sir Sayyid Ahmad admitted that the Muslims were 'more dissatisfied than the Hindus' and 'in most districts they

were rebellious'. This statement is applicable only to North India. In Hyderabad, the leading Muslim State, ably guided by the Nizam's minister Salar Jang, neither the people nor the troops took any part in the 'Mutiny'. The Hindus formed the majority of the mutineers.

Nature of the 'Mutiny'

Was the great outbreak of 1857-58 a military revolt confined to the sepoys or a national uprising against foreign rule?

According to a section of nineteenth-century British observers, 'throughout its whole progress the outbreak faithfully retained the character of a military revolt', and 'except in the newly conquered State of Oudh it was not taken up by the population'. A similar view was expressed by eminent Bengali public men like Kisorichand Mitra and Harish Chandra Mukherjee as also by Sir Sayyid Ahmad. Both the British Indian Association of Calcutta and the Muhammadan Association of Calcutta passed resolutions denouncing the 'Mutiny'. Dadabhai Naoroji observed that 'the people in India not only had no share in the Mutiny, but were actually ready at the call of the authorities to rise and support them'.

The leading nineteenth-century British writers on the 'Mutiny', such as Duff, Malleson, Kaye and Ball, represented it as a rebellion of the people—an organized enterprise to drive away the British from India—rather than a mere rising of the sepoys. As Indian nationalism took shape this view began to be endorsed by some of its leaders. It found forceful expression in the well-known book, *War of Indian Independence of 1857*, written by the distinguished revolutionary leader V. D. Savarkar. He expounded the theory that the 'Mutiny' was 'a planned and organized political and military rising aimed at destroying the British power in India'. It has been upheld by some later political leaders as also in some recent writings on the 'Mutiny'.

Historical criticism can hardly accept this interpretation of the 'Mutiny' as an article of faith. Even the rising of the sepoys was not on a national scale; it was 'localized, restricted and unorganized'. Of the three Presidency Armies—those of Bengal, Madras and Bombay—only one was affected by the 'Mutiny'. Even the Bengal Army as a whole did not take up arms against the British rulers. 'As each regiment mutinied,

many sepoys drifted back to their villages'. A considerable section fought actively on the side of the Government. Those who took up arms against the *Feringhees* were not organized for a large-scale war and had no proper military or political plan. Heroism and readiness for sacrifice, as well as crude and needless atrocities, gave their military operations a haphazard and complex character. The weakness of the revolt is proved by the fact that it was suppressed by a small British force.

The participation of a considerable section of the civil population in Rohilkhand and Oudh is the main argument in support of the theory that the 'Mutiny' was a *national* struggle for freedom. Such participation, however, was 'localized, restricted and unorganized'. Moreover, it was 'limited to a comparatively narrow region of India, comprising at best the greater part of the present Uttar Pradesh and a narrow zone to its east, west and south.' Outside these geographical limits the 'Mutiny' had no direct impact on the civil population. 'The whole of Bengal, Assam, Orissa, Rajasthan, and greater parts of the Punjab, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, as well as the whole of India south of the Narmada hardly witnessed any overt act of rebellion on the part of the people'.

In Oudh, says a modern historian, 'the revolt assumed a national dimension'; but he points out that 'the term must be used in a limited sense, for the conception of Indian nationality was yet in embryo'. He stresses another important point: 'the patriots of Oudh fought for their King and country' but 'they were not champions of freedom' of India. From their point of view it was a struggle for the expulsion of the British from Oudh only, not from India as a whole. Another point about the 'patriots of Oudh' deserves notice. The Talukdars generally adopted an attitude of benevolent neutrality towards the sepoys at the initial stage; they were driven into active rebellion by Canning's Proclamation of March 1858 which threatened them with forfeiture of lands. It was at this late stage that their action converted the resistance in Oudh into 'a war of local independence'.

In Rohilkhand the search for employment drove the common folk to the camp of Khan Bahadur Khan of Bareilly as also to the British camp; there was 'no enthusiasm for any

particular cause'. At Bijnor the masses were not behind the revolt, and the movement degenerated into communal strife. Moradabad was cut off from the 'Mutiny' by the Nawab of Rampur who remained loyal to the British.

Even within the restricted area where the civil population participated in rebellion, many ruling chiefs as also their adherents stood by the British. Among them were the Sikh rulers of the Cis-Sutlej States (Patiala, Nabha, Jind), the Nawab of Karnal, Sindhia, Holkar, the Nawabs of Bhopal and Jowra, and the Rajas of Dhar and Jabua. Practically the entire landed aristocracy of Bihar remained loyal to the British.

It is generally said that the 'Mutiny' forged real communal unity and gave it a *national* character. But the struggle was weakened by differences between the Hindus and the Muslims on different occasions and in different areas. In May 1857 the standard of *jihad* (holy war) was raised by the Muslims in the Jumma Masjid in Delhi. A deputation of Hindu officers complained to Bahadur Shah that war was being preached against the Hindus. He assured them that the *jihad* was against the English and he had 'forbidden it against the Hindus'. This was an ominous beginning. Although the sepoys and the common people of both communities fought together against the English, there were ugly incidents of communal strife at Bareilly, Bijnor, Moradabad and some other places where the Muslims shouted for the restoration of their rule.

Such strife indicated the absence of a common *political* aim. In the proclamations issued by the Muslim Chiefs of Oudh and Rohilkhand appeal was made to the two communities, in the name of their respective religions, to destroy the *Feringhees* so that they could gain eternal bliss in the next world. In the proclamation issued in Delhi in May 1857 the purpose of the rebellion was stated to be the removal of the danger of conversion of the Hindus and the Muslims to Christianity. 'There was no reference to the abstract ideal of freedom or the struggle for achieving independence'. The protection of religion—not the achievement of political freedom—was the professed object of the mutineers.

The restoration of the Mughal Emperor, of the Nawabi regime in Oudh and of Rohilla rule in Rohilkhand, as also the proclamation of Nana Saheb as Peshwa, were unplanned responses to developing situations. They do not conform to any integrated pattern of indigenous rule for the whole—or

even a large part—of India as a substitute for British rule. The risings in different sectors were limited in extent and objective; there was no united leadership, no central directive, no unifying political ideology. Such a struggle cannot be regarded as a 'war of independence'; it was rather a series of campaigns under different leaders for diverse purposes. It was not a *national* struggle for freedom, for the larger part of the country and large sections of the people took no part in it. Even at its later stages the struggle was dominated by religious and feudal ideas and parochial interests. It sought to restore the anachronistic political system associated with the Mughal *Padshahi*. It was completely out of tune with the new India which was being shaped by Western cultural and economic forces. 'It was in its essential character and dominant leadership the revolt of the old conservative and feudal forces and dethroned potentates for their rights and privileges which they saw in process of destruction.' If it had succeeded, the result would have been the restoration of 'the same disunited feudal India of the pre-British period, at best a confederacy of feudal States under the Delhi Emperor'.

Influence of Mutiny on political evolution

So far as the sepoys were concerned, the failure of the 'Mutiny' killed the idea of resistance to British rule. They reverted to their pre-'Mutiny' tradition and fought for their country's British masters in foreign countries during the two Great Wars. During the Second Great War the international situation enabled Subhas Chandra Bose to project into a section of the Indian Army in South-East Asia, after the collapse of British power in that part of the world, the idea of achieving independence for India through armed struggle with foreign aid. His great adventure failed. During the two Great Wars there was no mutiny of Indian soldiers in *India*.

The nineteenth-century educated Indians, who had no faith in armed rebellion, were confirmed in their political creed by the failure of the 'Mutiny'. Influenced by Western political ideas, 'they placed their faith in British liberalism and they had no doubt that as soon as they proved themselves worthy of it, the countrymen of Hampden, Milton and Burke would restore to them their birthright'. They confined their political horizon to the achievement of partial self-government under

the British flag. For seven decades after the 'Mutiny' they did not contemplate the total elimination of the British from India. Meanwhile 'a new generation arose who had more confidence in the violent methods of the Italian Carbonari and the Russian Nihilist than in the discredited method of constitutional agitation'. The memory of the 'Mutiny' was revived by them. 'During the first Great War the Indian revolutionaries did not relax in their efforts to organize another military rising'.

Meanwhile the civil population had forgotten the tradition of the 'Mutiny'. It was drawn to the national struggle for freedom during the Gándhian Era, but the sword was replaced by *satyagraha*.

Causes of failure of 'Mutiny'

The failure of the 'Mutiny' was not an accident; it was inevitable. The struggle lacked not only a general plan but also a central organization. Every locality had its own leaders, its own problems, and its own aspirations. There was no co-ordination of purposes and efforts. No amount of enthusiasm—even of patriotism—could overcome this basic weakness. On the British side there was complete unity of purpose as also an active and effective central organization. The Government of India directed the military, political and diplomatic activities of its agents in different fields. The new telegraph lines brought it news and conveyed its orders with speed unattainable by the rebels.

The principal leaders of the 'Mutiny'—Nana Saheb, Tantia Topi, Lakshmi Bai, Kunwar Singh—were far inferior to their British opponents in military ability and political foresight. The sepoys were inferior to the British troops in equipment, discipline and morale. The struggle did not throw up any leader who could counteract the effects of these weaknesses.

A detailed study of the operations connected with the relief of Lucknow and the recovery of Kanpur by the British reveals their superiority. The fall of Jhansi illustrates the hopeless inferiority of the Indians both in defensive war and in pitched battles. Neither Nana Saheb nor any other leader realized the importance of relieving Delhi from the British siege. No serious effort was made to cut off the flow of men

and equipment from the Punjab to Delhi, or to prevent the British troops proceeding from Calcutta to the west.

Bahadur Shah, whom the mutineers chose as the symbol of their struggle, had no political or military experience. Very old in age (he was about ninety), he wrote verses, had great faith in charmed amulets, and believed that he could transform himself into a fly or gnat. Nana Saheb had no political or military experience; he had never expected to be called upon to exercise power. His activities were marked by inefficiency as a commander of armed forces, a narrow and selfish outlook, and a vainglorious attitude. Lakshmi Bai's fame rests on the strength of her personal character and her courage. She could not show much ability as a military leader even in the narrow area to which her operations were confined. Tantia Topi and Kunwar Singh won some military successes; but they functioned in limited areas and exercised little influence on the struggle as a whole. Circumstances forced upon the leaders of the 'Mutiny' great responsibility as also limited power, but they were not equipped by character and training to carry the burden. India needed leaders of far greater ability for her liberation from the British yoke.

GOVERNORS-GENERAL UNDER THE
COMPANY¹

- Warren Hastings (October 1774—February 1785).²
Sir John Macpherson (February 1785—September 1786).
 Lord Cornwallis (September 1786—October 1793).
Sir John Shore (October 1793—March 1798).
Sir A. Clarke (March-May 1798).
 Lord Wellesley (May 1798—July 1805).
 Lord Cornwallis (July—October 1805).
Sir George Barlow (October 1805—July 1807).
 Lord Minto I (July 1807—October 1813).
 Lord Hastings (October 1813—January 1823).
John Adam (January—August 1823).
 Lord Amherst (August 1823—March 1828).
William B. Bayley (March—July 1828).
 Lord William Bentinck (July 1828—March 1835).³
Sir Charles Metcalfe (March 1835—March 1836).
 Lord Auckland (March 1836—February 1842).
 Lord Ellenborough (February 1842—June 1844).
William B. Bird (June—July 1844).
 Lord Hardinge I (July 1844—January 1848).
 Lord Dalhousie (January 1848—February 1856).
 Lord Canning (February 1856—November 1858).⁴

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- 1 The names of those who held the post temporarily are printed in italics.
 - 2 Hastings, who had been *Governor of Bengal* since April 1772, became *Governor-General of Bengal* under the Regulating Act (1773) in October 1774.
 - 3 Bentinck became *Governor-General of India* under the Charter Act of 1833.
 - 4 Canning became Viceroy (under the Queen's Proclamation, 1858) and *Governor-General under the British Crown* in November 1858 as a result of the transfer of India from the Company to the Crown under the Government of India Act, 1858. He held this office till March 1862.

PART II : 1858-1947

CHAPTER I

CONSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE DEVELOPMENTS (1858-1905)

I. STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT

End of East India Company's rule

The question whether the government of India should be left to the East India Company or taken over by the Crown arose in connection with the renewal of the Company's Charter in 1853. Parliament made a compromise. The Charter Act of 1853 provided that India should remain under the government of the Company 'in trust for the Crown until Parliament should otherwise direct'. No definite period was fixed for the continuation of the Company's rule so that it could be terminated by Parliament at any time. The 'Sepoy Mutiny' emphasized the undesirability of governing India through the Company. The 'Home' Government decided to bring India under the direct control of the Crown. In vain did the Company protest against the loss of its authority in a petition to Parliament drawn up by John Stuart Mill.

The *Government of India Act, 1858*, passed by Parliament, provided that 'India shall be governed by and in the name of the sovereign through one of the principal Secretaries of State, assisted by a Council of 15 members'. The Court of Directors and the Board of Control, which had been governing India since the passing of Pitt's India Act (1784), were abolished and their powers were vested in a single body known as the Secretary of State for India in Council. Thus the system of 'Double Government' introduced by Pitt's India Act was abolished. The framework of the Government of India remained unchanged. There was no modification of the composition and functions of the Governor-General's Council or of the system of Provincial Government.

The transfer of the government of India from the Company to the Crown was 'rather a formal than a substantial change'. The Charter Act of 1813 had explicitly declared the sovereignty of the Crown over the territories acquired by

the Company. The President of the Board of Control, a Minister of the Crown, had for a long time been the *de facto* supreme authority in regard to Indian affairs. In the petition drawn up by John Stuart Mill it was pointed out that in Indian affairs the British Cabinet, acting through the President of the Board of Control, had long possessed the decisive voice. Thus it was 'in the fullest sense accountable for all that has been done, and for all that has been forborne or omitted to be done'. This was correct, but political considerations prevailed. The Company, which had been the minor partner in the government of India since 1784, was overthrown in 1858, and the major partner—the British Cabinet acting in the name of the Crown, became the sole ruler.

The new system was inaugurated with some assurances incorporated in the *Queen's Proclamation* of 1 November 1858. It was declared for the satisfaction of the Indian princes that all treaties and engagements made with them by the Company would be 'scrupulously maintained' and no territorial extension would be sought. The principle of religious toleration would be followed; this was intended to remove the fear of conversion to Christianity which had been an important factor in the 'Mutiny'. It was also declared that no distinction would be made on grounds of race or creed in recruitment to the public service. This was a reiteration of a principle laid down by the Charter Act of 1833. The Governor-General was designated as 'Viceroy', i.e., the direct representative of the Crown. This did not add to his power, but his prestige was increased.

'Home' Authorities

The supremacy of the British Parliament over the territories of the British Crown in this sub-continent was 'legally complete'. From its inception in the Regulating Act (1773) till its abandonment in the Indian Independence Act (1947) it was the source of the governing power exercised by different authorities in British India as also by different authorities in England in matters relating to India. The powers of the Government of India and the Provincial Governments, the Central and Provincial Legislatures, and the High Courts in this country, as well as those of the Secretary of State in Council, were derived from Parliamentary enactments.

Since the introduction of the new legislative system in British India under the Charter Act of 1833, Parliament had

in practice ceased to legislate specially for this country except in matters relating to changes in the system of government. From 1858 onwards it controlled, through the Secretary of State for India, important matters relating to legislation, administration, finance and economic policy. Parliament's formal interference was, in practice, extremely limited although the Secretary of State exercised wide powers under the shadow of its legal authority. This system generally kept political issues affecting India beyond the scope of party strife in Parliament.

The Secretary of State for India was 'one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State'. He was a member of the British Cabinet and responsible to Parliament for all matters relating to India. For most purposes the authority of the Crown and of Parliament in Indian affairs was exercised by a statutory body created by the Government of India Act, 1858, and known as the Secretary of State in Council; but within a limited field powers were exercised by the Secretary of State acting alone. The Council of India was intended to act as a counterpoise to the centralization of powers in the hands of the Secretary of State. Its special status was indicated by the provision that no grant or appropriation of any part of the revenues of India was permissible without the concurrence of a majority of votes at a meeting of the Council. The relationship between the Secretary of State and the Council was, to a large extent, coloured by political exigencies and personal factors. The importance of the Council lay not only in its legal status but also in the fact that it was composed of men possessing special experience of Indian affairs. Its advice was, therefore, generally followed by the Secretary of State.

The statutory control of the Secretary of State in Council over the Government of India was limited by the fact that the Government of India enjoyed large powers under statutory provisions, and the Governor-General was, in many respects, 'an independent sovereign'. The relations between the Secretary of State and the Governor-General 'varied with personal equation'. Lord Northbrook's premature resignation and Lord Curzon's resignation long before the expiry of his second term of appointment were due to their differences with the Secretaries of State. Lord Curzon said later that India had 'an amazingly complex and dual form of administration' with two chiefs; it was only through tact, discretion and 'inter-com-

munication at every point' that this machinery could be made to function properly.

The Secretary of State controlled all projects of legislation (Imperial and Provincial), measures affecting revenues and in particular customs, measures affecting currency operations and public debt, and, in general, any proposal involving questions of policy or raising important administrative issues or involving large or novel expenditure. Among the classes of business on which he placed restrictions upon the powers of the Government of India were: the construction of public works and railways, the creation of new appointments with high salaries, the raising of the pay of Government servants, additions to military expenditure, etc.

The manner in which this system actually worked depended upon various factors. It is generally admitted that the 'Home' Government's interference increased after the transfer of the Government of India from the Company to the Crown. Apart from the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1858, there were extra-legal factors such as the increased facilities of communication between England and India, the establishment of telegraphs, and the large investments of British capital in India. This system was justified on the ground that, as there was no popular control over the Government of India, it should be subject to the control of the Minister who was responsible to Parliament.

The Government of India

The office of Governor-General was reserved, not by statute but by practice, for men who had achieved some distinction in the public life of England. During the period 1858-1947 only one person outside this category, Sir John (later Lord) Lawrence, a distinguished civil servant of the East India Company, held this office (1864-69). Under the Queen's Proclamation (1858) the Governor-General had the additional designation of 'Viceroy'.

Under the Charter Act of 1833 the Governor-General's Council was composed of four 'Ordinary' Members and one 'Extraordinary' Member (the Commander-in-Chief of the Bengal Army). The Charter Act of 1853 enlarged the Council by the addition of some members who were entitled to sit in it only when it met to make laws and regulations. Thus the Council was divided into two wings: executive and legislative. The Indian Councils Act of 1861 raised the number of

'Ordinary' Members from four to five. Another Act, passed by Parliament in 1874, raised the number of 'Ordinary' Members from five to six. No Indian was admitted to the Council as an 'Ordinary' Member before 1909.

Since 1786 the Governor-General had the statutory power to override the Council and act on his own responsibility in special cases. But recourse to this power was 'very seldom necessary'. The Governor-General occupied a higher position than the Councillors in law, in social status and in political influence. His position *vis-a-vis* his Council depended largely upon his personality, political background, administrative ideas and ability, and capacity for leadership.

Under the law the Governor-General in Council functioned as a Board. Neither the Governor-General nor any 'Ordinary' Member had special charge of any particular Department; the 'Extraordinary' Member, as Commander-in-Chief, was the professional head of the Army. The result was the direct participation of the Governor-General and all Members of Council in the transaction of all kinds of business. It was a cumbrous system in which no one had individual responsibility for any measure taken by the Government of India; and prompt action could not be taken because 'everything, small as well as great', had to be decided by the Council as a body. The Indian Councils Act of 1861 introduced the portfolio system. The Governor-General and all 'Ordinary' Members took personal charge of specified Departments and made decisions on such matters as were not considered important enough to be placed before the Council.

The Council held meetings of two kinds: ordinary meetings, i.e., meetings for transaction of executive business, and legislative meetings, i.e., meetings for the purpose of making laws and Regulations. The terms 'Executive Council' and 'Legislative Council' were used to indicate these two separate functions. The Executive Council had no legal or political responsibility to the Legislative Council.

Provincial Government

The British territories in India were initially grouped into three Presidencies: Fort William in Bengal (under a Governor-General and a Council), Fort St. George or Madras (under a Governor and a Council), and Bombay (under a Governor and a Council). The two latter Presidencies retained this form

of government, despite addition of territories at different times, till 1920. Bengal, however, passed through several changes.

During the period 1836-53 two new patterns of Provincial Government were evolved: Lieutenant-Governorship and Chief Commissionership. A Lieutenant-Governor's province was subject to the control of the Governor-General in Council to a much larger extent than the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay. A Lieutenant-Governor had no independent power. No Lieutenant-Governor had an Executive Council till 1910. The Lieutenant-Governors of different provinces were given Legislative Councils at different times between 1862 and 1912. The first Lieutenant-Governorship was the North-Western Provinces, created in 1836; the second was Bengal, created in 1854. Subsequently the Chief Commissionerships of the Punjab, the Central Provinces, and Burma were upgraded into Lieutenant-Governorships.

Chief Commissioners occupied a lower status than Lieutenant-Governors. They exercised only such powers, as were assigned to them by the Governor-General in Council. No Chief Commissioner had an Executive or a Legislative Council. The Punjab, Oudh, the Central Provinces, Burma, Assam, British Baluchistan, the North-West Frontier Province, and Delhi were placed under Chief Commissioners at different times.

The Presidency Governments (Madras and Bombay) enjoyed certain special privileges which were survivals from the eighteenth century. They could correspond directly with the Secretary of State on all matters other than financial. They could appeal to him against any order of the Government of India. Each of them had a separate cadre of the Indian Civil Service. Each had, till 1893, a Presidency Army with a Commander-in-Chief. Each of them had a Legislative Council under the Indian Councils Act of 1861. On the whole they were less subject to the control of the Government of India than the other Provincial Governments.

Unitary Government

By the Government of India Act, 1858, Parliament committed to the Secretary of State the 'lever' by which 'the whole system of government in the country was operated'. For practical convenience, however, 'the system itself centred in the Governor-General in Council'. As a result the government of

the country was completely unitary. The Provincial Governments were mere 'agents' of the Government of India; they had 'no innate powers of their own'.

Although there was no statutory separation of powers between the Government of India and the Provincial Governments, the former alone could not 'support the Atlantean load'. It retained in its own hands important matters such as foreign affairs, defence, general taxation, currency, public debt, tariffs, posts and telegraphs, railways, and accounts and auditing. Other matters, such as ordinary internal administration, police, civil and criminal justice, prisons, land-revenue, education, medical and sanitary arrangements, irrigation, buildings and roads, and municipal and rural boards were left to the Provincial Governments. But they were subject to such directions as the Government of India chose to issue, and such control as it chose to exercise, from time to time.

Financial system

Of the various methods used by the Government of India to enforce subordination on the Provincial Governments, financial control was the most important.

Under the Charter Acts of 1833 and 1853, as also under the Government of India Act of 1858, the revenues of India were treated as a single fund, to be used by the Government of India for the purposes of the administration of India as a whole. As a result all revenues flowed initially into the coffers of the Government of India which had the legal responsibility for the distribution of the funds needed by the Local Governments. In exercising this responsibility the Government of India followed an extremely rigid system. Expenditure on the smallest item—such as the repair of a stable or the employment of a menial servant—required its sanction. Under such an over-centralized system there could be no stimulus for the Provincial Governments for increasing income or practising economy.

The financial difficulties following the 'Sepoy Mutiny' stressed the need of rigid control over the country's finances. 'In its anxiety to prevent extravagance' the Government of India 'imposed rules of such stringency that no financial authority remained except its own'. But moderate proposals for financial decentralization were discussed in the sixties. It was considered necessary to place upon every Provincial

Government a specific responsibility for maintaining an equilibrium between its income and expenditure.

Financial decentralization

A new financial system was introduced by a Resolution of the Government of India (1870) during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Mayo (1869-72). The underlying principle of the new policy was thus stated: '... it is desirable to enlarge the power and responsibility of Governments of Presidencies and Provinces in respect to the public expenditure in some of the civil departments'. Fixed amounts were granted to the Provincial Governments, from the revenues collected by the Government of India, for certain 'departments of administration in which they may be supposed to take special interest', e.g., jails, registration, police, education, medical services, roads, civil buildings, etc. This arrangement was subject to certain conditions as also to supervisory interference by the Government of India.

The new system was expected to produce three desirable results: greater care and economy, an element of certainty, and greater 'harmony in action and feeling' between the Government of India and the Provincial Governments. The latter became comparatively free from the interference of the former; but most of them had grievances about the distribution of assignments. Economy was not promoted, for the Provincial Governments supplemented the assignments by taxing the provincial resources, thereby making the burden on the people heavier.

New settlements made during Lord Lytton's Governor-Generalship (1876-80) assigned to the Provincial Governments financial control over services connected with general administration, land-revenue, excise, stamps, and law and justice. At the same time they were given the revenues raised from law and justice, excise, stamps and some other items. However, any increase in these revenues was to be shared with the Government of India. In settlements with Burma and Assam a new feature was introduced: a share of the land-revenue was substituted for fixed assignments. In Lytton's system 'for the first time we meet with a classification of revenue heads into Indian (*i.e.*, Central), Provincial, and divided'.

The principle applied to Burma in 1879 was applied to the whole of India by a Resolution of the Government of India

(1881) during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Ripon (1880-84). It was declared that 'instead of giving Local Governments a fixed sum of money to make good any excess of provincialised expenditure over provincialised receipts, a certain proportion of the Imperial revenue of each province should be devoted to this object'. Accordingly, receipts from certain sources were treated as Imperial, receipts from certain other sources (such as forest, excise, license-tax or income-tax, stamps and registration) were divided between the Government of India and the Provincial Governments, and receipts of a third category ('Provincial rates') were allotted entirely to the Provincial Governments. For the excess of provincial outlays over the provincial revenues the Provincial Governments were compensated by a percentage of the land-revenue which was otherwise an Imperial revenue. This arrangement was subject to the principle that 'the revenues assigned to the provinces were the revenues of India, though alienated for a term to provincial uses with a view to their better and more economical administration'. Constitutionally no province had a revenue of its own. There was no question of real fiscal autonomy for the provinces; their limited freedom of action rested on the grace of the Government of India.

'Provincial (financial) contracts'

The settlements now became quinquennial. Revised settlements were made in 1887, in 1892, and in 1897. No change in principle was introduced; but in order to meet the increasing demands of the provinces, land-revenue, a constant source, came to be treated as ordinarily divisible between them and the Government of India. The shares of the provinces in the divided heads of revenue were altered in such a manner that a substantial share of the increase in the revenues went to the Government of India. As the shares of divided revenues proved inadequate for provincial needs, the Provincial Governments had to depend on fixed assignments which were adjusted under the land-revenue head. Each of them showed a tendency towards large expenditure at the end of a settlement period so that it could claim better terms in the next. There were repeated controversies between the Government of India and the Provincial Governments. There was 'no continuity of provincial finance'.

This system of 'provincial contracts' had many critics. Some Provincial Governments had complaints. The Indian National Congress, founded in 1885, passed a resolution in 1896, stating that the assignments were inadequate for provincial needs and demanding that 'a further step should be taken in the matter of decentralization, by leaving the responsibility of the financial administration of the different provinces principally to the Local Governments'. Lord Curzon's Government (1898-1905) reported to the Secretary of State in 1902 that the apportionment of revenue to the provinces had never been made 'on any definite or logical principle' and the system, instead of being conducive to economy, had 'set a premium on extravagance'. Moreover, it had proved 'a fruitful source of misapprehension and complaint on the part of the Local Governments'.

'Quasi-permanent' financial system

To remove these difficulties, and to introduce an 'element of relative permanence' into the settlements, a new system was introduced during Lord Curzon's administration in 1904. The main principle was that the Provincial Governments were to be given 'a permanent, instead of a merely temporary interest in the revenue and expenditure under their control'. The actual heads of revenue—Imperial, Provincial, divided—were left unchanged; but fixed revenues were assigned to the Provincial Governments; these could not be altered by the Government of India except in the case of 'grave imperial necessity'. Thus the provinces received the whole of the 'provincial rates' and receipts from registration, police, education, law and justice, and medical. The receipts from land-revenue, stamps, income-tax and forests were shared between the Government of India and the provinces, generally in equal proportions. The provinces also received fixed assignments under the land-revenue head. Initial lump grants were allotted to them so that they could undertake works of public utility.

Under this system the Provincial Governments could draw upon 'permanent growing revenues'. They were also given larger powers for expenditure on local purposes. They had no borrowing powers.

The settlements under the new plan were to be 'permanent, in the sense that they shall not be subject to revision at the end of fixed periods'. But the right of the Government of

India to revise the settlement of any or all provinces at any time was reserved.

This 'quasi-permanent' system was made permanent in 1912 during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Hardinge (1910-16). A greater responsibility was placed on the Provincial Governments for their financial stability, and they were given larger power in financial matters. But they remained bound to contribute to imperial finances in times of war or financial crisis.

Army

During the period of the Company's rule each of the three Presidencies had its own Army under its own Commander-in-Chief. This anomalous system continued after 1858. Each of the Presidency Armies was governed by its own code of regulations. Apart from the basic defects of such decentralization, 'the Presidency sentiment, a peculiar form of local patriotism, was very strong, not only in the Indian ranks, but among British officers also'.

In 1893 the offices of Commander-in-Chief in Madras and Bombay were abolished; the control of the Madras and Bombay Armies was withdrawn from the Presidency Governments and vested in the Government of India.

The administration of the Army suffered from two principal defects. At the top there was dual control. The official head of the Military Department was the Military Member who was an 'Ordinary Member' of the Governor-General's Council. He was responsible for Army finance, contracts, ordnances, stores, etc. The Commander-in-Chief of the Bengal Army, as an 'Extraordinary Member' of the Council, was responsible for the personnel of the Army—for appointments, promotion, discipline, intelligence, conduct of war, etc. This division of responsibilities led to confusion and even conflict, for the efficient discharge of the Commander-in-Chief's functions depended to a large extent on the Military Member's ideas and methods.

The internal stresses and strains of this dual system reached a crisis during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Curzon. He found in Lord Kitchener a Commander-in-Chief who demanded larger powers and greater freedom than he was allowed under the existing system. The Secretary of State proposed a compromise on the division of powers between the

Military Member (who was to be replaced by a Military Supply Member) and the Commander-in-Chief (1905). Lord Curzon was not satisfied; he resigned, but the new arrangement came into force. Within a few years, however, chaos prevailed in the military system. This was largely responsible for the British reverses in the Mesopotamia campaign in the First Great War.

2. LEGISLATIVE SYSTEM

Inadequacy of existing system

The Charter Act of 1853 enlarged the Governor-General's Council for legislative purposes by the addition of some members who would take part only in those meetings of the Council which made laws and Regulations. For the first time legislation was treated as 'a special function of Government requiring special machinery and special processes'.

This arrangement practically meant the bifurcation of the Governor-General's Council into two distinct bodies: an Executive Council transacting executive business, and a Legislative Council making laws and Regulations. Lord Dalhousie (1848-56) treated the Legislative Council as 'an independent body' and adopted a procedure which converted it into a mini Parliament. This was disliked by Sir Charles Wood, President of the Board of Control, later Secretary of State for India, who was not prepared to give India 'the nucleus and beginning of a constitutional Parliament'. This was disliked also by Dalhousie's successor, Lord Canning (1856-62). Apart from the questions of independent status and Parliamentary procedure, the Legislative Council tried to take upon itself more authority than Sir Charles Wood was prepared to assign to it.

A change in this legislative system was necessary for another reason. The Charter Act of 1833 made the Governor-General in Council the sole law-making authority for the whole of British India; the legislative powers previously enjoyed by the Governors in Council of Madras and Bombay were taken away. The Charter Act of 1853 made a small concession: the Heads of the Governments of Madras and Bombay, as also those of the provinces under Lieutenant-Governors, were empowered to send one nominated person each to sit in the Legislative Council. This arrangement did not satisfy the Governments of Madras and Bombay. They felt that the matters relating

to internal administration in their provinces should not be 'discussed and decided by a body in which officers of Bengal, or acquainted with Bengal alone, have a strong preponderance'.

Meanwhile, a political factor was acquiring a new importance. 'The terrible events of the Mutiny brought home to men's minds the dangers arising from the entire exclusion of Indians from association with the legislation of the country'. Sir Sayyid Ahmad said in 1858 that the 'non-admission' of Indians into the Legislative Council formed the main originating cause of this rebellion to which all other causes were secondary'. In 1853 Indian Political Associations had demanded participation in the Legislative Council which was proposed to be formed, and Dalhousie had recommended inclusion of non-official Indian members; but Sir Charles Wood, did not consider it 'desirable to place natives in the Council'. As a result, Sir Sayyid Ahmad said, 'the Government could never know the inadvisability of any of the laws and Regulations which it passed' and 'the people had no means of protesting against what they might feel to be a foolish measure, or giving public expression to their own wishes'.

Indian Councils Act (1861)

Sir Charles Wood, the author of the Charter Act of 1853, was also the author of the Indian Councils Act which Parliament passed in 1861.

Under the Act the Governor-General's Council, while making laws and Regulations, was to be composed of three categories of members: (1) all 'Ordinary Members' of the Council as also its 'Extraordinary Member' or 'Extraordinary Members' (the Commander-in-Chief of Bengal and the Governor of Madras or Bombay whenever the Council assembled within the territories of either of those Presidencies); (2) the Lieutenant-Governor of the province (either Bengal or the Punjab, in the normal course) in which the Council assembled; (3) 'additional members' nominated by the Governor-General, of whom not less than one-half should be non-officials. The number of additional members was to be not less than six nor more than twelve.

There was no statutory provision for nomination of any non-official Indian as a member of the Council. Sir Charles Wood argued that it was 'impossible' to constitute a 'representative' law-making body in India, for 'real representatives of

the various classes of the native population of that empire' could not be found. After the passing of the Act he directed the Governor-General to select the non-official 'additional members' from among Europeans and 'natives' from all parts of India. He anticipated that 'the introduction of intelligent native gentlemen into the Council will bring into its deliberations a knowledge of the wishes and feelings of the native population, which cannot fail to improve the laws passed by the Council by adapting them to the wants of the great mass of the population of India'. By 'intelligent native gentlemen' he did not mean the politically conscious spokesmen of the educated classes. He meant the 'native chiefs', such as the rulers and ministers of the Princely States and the big landholders.

The legislative power conferred on the Governor-General in Council was extensive. They were empowered 'to make laws and Regulations for all persons, whether British or native, foreigners or others, and for all courts of justice whatever, and for all places or things whatever' within the territories of British India, as also for all servants of the Government of India within the dominions of princes and States in alliance with Her Majesty'. But there were important restrictions. For instance, the Governor-General in Council could not pass any law which might affect any provision of any law passed by Parliament relating to Indian affairs, or the authority of Parliament, or any part of the unwritten laws or Constitution of England, or the sovereignty or dominion of the British Crown over any part of its Indian territories. These restrictions emphasise the position of the Governor-General in Council as a subordinate Legislature functioning subject to the legislative supremacy of Parliament.

Sir Charles Wood did not recognize the existence of a Legislative Council which was separate from the Executive Council. He did not want an 'Anglo-Indian House of Commons' which not only made laws but also concerned itself with administrative matters. So the Act confined the functions of the enlarged Council strictly to legislation. It provided that 'no business' should be transacted at any meeting of this Council 'other than the consideration and enactment' of legislative measures.

Every law made by the Council would be subject to the assent of the Governor-General who could withhold his assent

or reserve the measure for 'the signification of the pleasure of Her Majesty thereon'. No law would be valid without the assent of the Governor-General or, in case of reservation, of Her Majesty communicated through the Secretary of State in Council.

The Act conferred on the Governor-General 'one power of a novel character' which became a permanent feature of the Indian constitutional system. He was empowered 'to make and promulgate, from time to time, Ordinances for the peace and good government' of British India or any part thereof, subject to the restrictions applicable to the law-making powers of the Governor-General in Council. Every Ordinance was to have the force of law for a period of not more than six months from its promulgation.

As regards the executive business of the Governor-General's Council, the Act made provision for distribution of business among its Members by the Governor-General. This meant introduction of the portfolio system.

The Act modified the process of centralization of legislative power initiated by the Charter Act of 1833 and confirmed by the Charter Act of 1853. Madras and Bombay were given Legislative Councils, and provision was made for the establishment of Legislative Councils in provinces under Lieutenant-Governors.

The general pattern of the Legislative Councils in Madras and Bombay was similar to that of the Governor-General's Legislative Council. The Governor's Council was to be expanded for legislative purposes by the inclusion of the Advocate-General of the Presidency and the nomination of 'additional members'—not less than four nor more than eight in number—of whom not less than half should be 'non-official persons'. To acquire validity every law made by a Governor's Council required the assent of the Governor as also of the Governor-General. No Governor's Council could make any law which might affect any provision of any Act of Parliament or which dealt with certain specified matters, e.g., the public debt, the Penal Code, currency, relations with foreign States, etc.

The Governor-General was empowered to extend by proclamation the provisions relating to the Legislative Councils of Madras and Bombay to the existing Lieutenant-Governor's provinces (Bengal, the North-Western Provinces, and the Punjab), as also to other such provinces as might be constituted

in future. Legislative Councils were established in Bengal in 1862, in the North-Western Provinces—renamed later (1901) the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh—in 1886, in the Punjab as also in Burma in 1897, and—following the Partition of Bengal—in Eastern Bengal and Assam in 1905.

The 'Councillors' of the Lieutenant-Governors (whose number was to be fixed by the Governor-General) were to be nominated by the Lieutenant-Governor 'for his assistance in making laws and Regulations'. Not less than one-third of such 'Councillors' in every case were to be 'non-official persons'. A Lieutenant-Governor in Council was empowered to make 'laws for the peace and good government' of his province. This power was subject to the provisions of the Act limiting the legislative power of the Governor in Council of Madras and Bombay and also the provisions of the Act relating to the Governor-General's assent and the Crown's power of disallowance.

The Governor-General in Council had concurrent powers to legislate for territories under Governors in Council and under Lieutenant-Governors. In other words, there was no demarcation of jurisdiction of the central and local Legislatures as in federal Constitutions. Again, the previous sanction of the Governor-General was required for legislation by Provincial Legislative Councils in certain cases, and all Bills passed by them required the Governor-General's assent. 'To this extent the Governor-General was given direct and personal control over the exercise of all legislative authority in India'. The Act of 1861 provided for decentralization of the legislative system only to a limited extent.

Reform proposals

In the seventies a public demand for reform of the Legislatures functioning under the Act of 1861 gradually took shape. They were numerically small, the system of nomination led sometimes to abuses, and their functions were too restricted to meet the people's needs. The Indian National Congress, at its first session (1885), passed a resolution demanding the 'reform and expansion' of the Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils 'by the admission of a considerable proportion of elected members'. Another demand was the creation of Legislative Councils for the North-Western Provinces as also for the Punjab. A more elaborate and concrete programme was issued in the second session (1886). In 1891

the Congress demanded that the people of India should be 'allowed, through their elected representatives, a potential voice in the Legislatures of their country'.

The inadequacies of the legislative system attracted official attention as early as the days of Lord Mayo (1869-72). Lord Ripon (1880-84) held the view that the situation called for a basic change in the composition of the Legislative Councils which, not being representative in character, had failed to establish any real contact between the Government and the people. After observing the Indian scene for more than a year his successor, Lord Dufferin (1884-88), came to a similar conclusion. He thought that the desire of the educated classes to take a larger part in the management of their domestic affairs was 'a legitimate and reasonable aspiration'. In 1886 he gave the North-Western Provinces a Legislative Council under the provisions of the Act of 1861. His proposals for the reform of the Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils, which were generally supported by his successor, Lord Lansdowne (1888-94), formed the basis of the Indian Councils Act which was passed by Parliament in 1892.

Indian Councils Act (1892)

This Act provided that the number of 'additional members' of the Governor-General's Legislative Council should be not less than 10 nor more than 16. In the case of the Councils of the Governors of Madras and Bombay, it was to be not less than 8 nor more than 20 'besides the Advocate-General of the Presidency'. The Governor-General in Council could, by proclamation, increase the number of 'Councillors' in Bengal and the North-Western Provinces, subject to a maximum of 20 in the former and 16 in the latter. The proportion of non-official members prescribed by the Act of 1861 was not to be diminished.

Apart from expansion in size, provision was made for modification of procedure regarding the transaction of business in the Legislative Councils. Provision was made for the discussion of the budget and the asking of questions, under prescribed conditions and restrictions as to subject or otherwise, in the Imperial as also in the Provincial Legislative Councils. But there was to be no voting on the budget. The provision for financial discussion was expected to give the Government

an 'opportunity of explaining their financial policy, of removing misapprehension, and of answering criticism and attack'.

The Act contained no provision for election of non-official members; but the Regulations framed under the Act provided for indirect election in certain cases. In the case of the Governor-General's Legislative Council 4 members would be 'selected and recommended' by the non-official members of the Legislative Councils of Madras, Bombay, Bengal and the North-Western Provinces, at least one (elected by the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce, a European body) would represent the interests of commerce, and one might be chosen from the Calcutta Bar. The electors' function would be that of recommendation only; the 'ultimate selection' would rest with the Governor-General. In the case of the Provincial Legislative Councils some non-official members would be 'selected and nominated' by University graduates, groups of municipal corporations, groups of District Boards, big land-holders, and associations of merchants, manufacturers and tradesmen. Here also the 'ultimate selection' would rest on the Governor or Lieutenant-Governor concerned. The principle behind this arrangement was to bring to the Legislative Councils 'representatives of types and classes rather than areas and numbers'. The official view was that in a large country like India, with a population composed of many different classes unfamiliar with the Western democratic system, it was not possible to introduce a 'complete or symmetrical system of representation'.

Defects of legislative system

The Legislative Councils created by the Acts of 1861 and 1892 were 'merely enlarged advisory committees of the Executive Councils for purposes of enacting laws'. They had no control whatsoever on administration, finance or foreign policy. The right of discussing the budget and of asking questions, conferred by the Act of 1892, was too restricted to serve any practical purpose.

The size of the Legislative Councils was too small for a big and populous country like India, and in every case there was a substantial official majority. For instance, under the Act of 1892 the total number of members in the Governor-General's Legislative Council was 25, and among them there were 15 officials. In every Provincial Council there was a clear

official majority. In the Imperial Legislative Council, as also in the Provincial Legislative Councils, official members had no freedom of speech or of voting; they had to obey instructions which they received from the Governor-General. They were not legislators in the true sense of the term; they were instruments for carrying through the Legislatures the policies laid down by the Government of India and the Secretary of State.

The non-official Indian members of the Legislative Councils were very few in number. They had no representative character. Coming from the upper classes of society—the feudal and educated classes—they could not voice the grievances and demands of the masses of the people. The composition and procedure of the Legislative Councils strictly limited their opportunities of doing useful work. Yet some of them highly distinguished themselves by their Parliamentary ability. Among them were Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and Gopal Krishna Gokhale in the Imperial Legislative Council; Surendra Nath Banerjee and Ananda Mohan Bose in the Bengal Legislative Council; C. Vijayaraghavachariar and N. Subbarau Pantalu in the Madras Legislative Council; Sir Chimanlal Setalvad and Sir Gokuldas Parekh in the Bombay Legislative Council; and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya in the Legislative Council of the United Provinces. 'It would be a mistake to belittle the value of the work of these and other members because it did not always or often bear fruit. For it is certain that if the majority of them had been failures, if they had betrayed a lack of capacity or of a sense of responsibility, there would have been no Morley-Minto Councils in after years'.

Law Commission

The Charter Act of 1833 provided for the creation of a Law Commission, composed of a few legal experts, for the purpose of preparing drafts of laws in the form of codes which would be considered and enacted by the Governor-General in Council. The Law Commission was an advisory committee: it could propose laws, but the Governor-General in Council was the sole authority for making laws.

The First Law Commission, constituted in 1835 in Calcutta, prepared several drafts, including a draft Penal Code; but these were not enacted as laws. The Second Law Commission, constituted under the Charter Act of 1853, functioned in

London from 1853 to 1856. It prepared several drafts which formed the basis of the Indian High Courts Act of 1861 passed by Parliament, as also of three important codes (the Code of Civil Procedure, 1861; the Penal Code, 1860; the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1861) passed by the Governor-General in Council. These measures brought about far-reaching changes in the legal and judicial systems of the country.

The Third Law Commission, constituted in London in 1861, formally adopted the law of England as the basis of legislation in India. It provided drafts for several important laws—the Evidence Act, the Transfer of Property Act, the Indian Succession Act, the Contract Act, etc.—which were enacted by the Governor-General's Legislative Council. Some other branches of law (the law of marriage and divorce, the law of trustees, the law of land acquisition, etc.) were codified by the Legislative Department of the Government of India and their drafts were passed by the Governor-General's Legislative Council. Two successive Law Members of the Government of India (1865-72), Sir Henry Maine and Sir James Stephen, were primarily responsible for enactment of numerous laws within a few years, and there were complaints of 'over-legislation'.

The Fourth Law Commission, constituted in 1879, functioned in Calcutta. Several important Acts were passed by the Governor-General's Legislative Council on the basis of its recommendations.

3. ADMINISTRATION

Indian Civil Service

Since the days of Lord Cornwallis the administrative system had been assuming an increasingly bureaucratic character. This process was continued and consolidated after 1858: the Indian Civil Service—the cream of the bureaucracy—became the 'steel frame' of the British Indian Empire.

The Government of India Act, 1858, empowered the Secretary of State in Council to make Regulations for the admission of persons to the Indian Civil Service on the basis of open competitive examination to be held by the Civil Service Commissioners in London. Provision for such examination, replacing the old system of nomination of candidates by

the Directors of the Company, had been made before the passing of the Act of 1858; and the first examination had been held in 1855. All natural-born subjects of the Crown were eligible, subject to prescribed age limits and qualifications. Candidates recommended by the Civil Service Commissioners 'according to the order of their proficiency' would be appointed to fill up vacancies in the Indian Civil Service by the Secretary of State in Council.

The Indian Civil Service Act of 1861, passed by Parliament, reserved certain categories of high executive and judicial posts for members of the Indian Civil Service. The Non-Regulation Provinces were excluded from the scope of this Act. One important feature of this Act was the repeal of the provision of the Charter Act of 1793 relating to the promotion of civil servants by seniority. This deprived the future Indian members of the Indian Civil Service of the right to promotion by seniority. No Indian—not even an officer of the calibre of Ramesh Chandra Dutt—attained substantively the rank of a Divisional Commissioner, and no Indian member of the Judicial Branch of the Indian Civil Service became even a temporary Judge of a High Court, in the nineteenth century.

For three decades after 1858 there was a continuing controversy over the age of recruitment to the Indian Civil Service. It was connected partly with the question of duration of period of training in England and partly with the convenience of Oxford and Cambridge students who offered themselves for the competitive examination. In 1876 the age limit for the examination was reduced to 19. This seriously prejudiced the Indian aspirants who found it extremely difficult to go to England and sit for a stiff examination at an early age. Even among the British competitors the number decreased, and their academic qualifications showed a marked trend towards deterioration. Lord Ripon wrote in 1884 that 'boys who have just left school are the competitors, and University graduates are almost entirely excluded from the Service'. In 1892 the minimum age limit was raised to 21 and the maximum to 23.

Indianization of Indian Civil Service

The first Indian who passed the competitive examination for the Indian Civil Service in London was Satyendra Nath

Tagore, an elder brother of Rabindra Nath Tagore and a grandson of Dwarka Nath Tagore. In 1869 there were three successful Indian candidates: Surendra Nath Banerjee, Ramesh Chandra Dutt, Bihari Lal Gupta.

In 1870 Parliament passed an Act making provision for appointment of Indians, under special rules, to certain offices reserved for the members of the Indian Civil Service. This did not mean any modification of the system of open competitive examination. However, under this Act rules were made by Lord Lytton (1876-80) in 1879 for the appointment of Indians, through nomination, to what was called the 'Statutory Civil Service'. This arrangement proved to be unsatisfactory. It was abolished on the recommendation of the Aitchison Commission on Public Services (1889) which had been appointed by Lord Dufferin (1884-88).

During the years 1877-79 the newly established Indian Association organized a national agitation on the Indian Civil Service question. The first step was to protest against the reduction of the age-limit from 21 to 19. Surendra Nath Banerjee, who had been removed from the Indian Civil Service for a technical mistake, became the principal spokesman. The purpose of the agitation was 'to bring the various Indian provinces upon the same common platform ... through a sense of common grievance and the inspiration of a common resolve'. Banerjee addressed crowded meetings in some principal cities of North and South India. Lal Mohan Ghosh went to England as the Indian Association's delegate. The result of this agitation was the creation of the Statutory Civil Service, but the rule on the reduction of age-limit was not modified.

The Indian National Congress at its very first session (1885) took up the cause which the Indian Association had sponsored about a decade ago. It passed a resolution demanding simultaneous examinations for the Indian Civil Service—one in England and one in India—and fixation of the higher age-limit at not less than 23. The demand for simultaneous examinations was reiterated by the Congress year after year, but official policy remained unchanged. Lord Curzon's Government adopted a Resolution in 1904, stating that 'the highest ranks of civil employment in India, those in the Imperial Civil Service, must ... as a general rule, be held by Englishmen for the reason that they possess, partly by heredity,

partly by upbringing and partly by education, the knowledge of the principles of government, the habits of mind and vigour of character which are essential for the task'. It was added that 'the rule of India being a British rule... the tone and standard should be set by those who had created and are responsible for it'. This policy of virtual monopoly for Englishmen explains the fact that as late as 1913 Indians held only 5 per cent of the total number of posts in the Indian Civil Service.

In 1912 the 'Home' Government appointed a Royal Commission on the Public Services in India under the Chairmanship of Lord Islington. Its Report, published in 1917, rejected the demand for simultaneous examinations. But it recommended that recruitment should be made through two separate channels: 'one in London which should be open to all alike without racial discrimination (i.e., Englishmen and Indians) and one in India open to statutory natives only'. This system was introduced after the First Great War.

Role of Indian Civil Service

Throughout the entire period of British rule in India the Covenanted Civil Service played a role which, in respect of variety and importance, had no parallel in the history of any other country. Appointed to deal with commercial transactions, the Company's servants became executive and judicial officers as also policy-makers in the closing decades of the eighteenth century. Three permanent and several temporary Governors-General came from their ranks. The office of provincial satraps was monopolized by them, except in the case of Madras and Bombay, and in the case of Bengal from 1912. They filled the majority of posts in the Imperial and Provincial Executive Councils and in the Council of the Secretary of State. They held the office of Judges in the highest courts: the Sadar Dewani and Nizamat Adalats as also the High Courts. They monopolized, with few exceptions, the posts of Secretaries to the Imperial and Provincial Governments, Commissioners of Divisions, District Magistrates, District Judges, and even Inspectors-General of Police till the early years of the present century. They shaped the processes of policy-making and law-making.

Invested with functions and powers unknown to civil servants in other countries, the members of the Covenanted Civil Service attained 'a certain intangible superiority of position, a cold invulnerability', which made 'sympathetic relations' with Indians 'impossible'. The bitterness caused by the 'Sepoy Mutiny' widened the gulf. The Ilbert Bill controversy (1883-81) not only revealed but also accentuated the spirit of racial discrimination which dominated the administration. The British Civilians, with honourable exceptions, looked upon Indians as an inferior people, irrespective of their education and social status. They believed themselves to be superior even to Indians who were their colleagues in the Indian Civil Service, and their attitude was supported by the policy of the Government which denied the Indian Civilians equality of treatment in respect of promotion.

Even the Montagu-Chelmsford Report (1917), which recommended 'progressive realization of responsible government' by India, could not think of a self-governing India which would no longer need British Civilians with their 'energies finely dedicated to the well-being of India'. The Covenanted Service undoubtedly contributed to the 'well-being of India', but in a limited sense. It built up an imposing administrative machinery which was marked by industry, mechanical efficiency, and incorruptibility in the higher ranks. It has been described as 'an enlightened, hard-working, disinterested, very small official class ruling a great country'. (In 1913 the total number of Civilians serving in the whole of British India was 1,371). Gokhale, the great nationalist leader, said in 1905: Many of them 'brought to their work a high level of ability, a keen sense of duty and a conscientious desire, within the limits of the restricted opportunities permitted by the predominance of other interests, to do what good they can do to the people'. But he pointed out that the system under which they worked was 'at fault': it 'relegates the interests of the people to a very subordinate place and, by putting too much power into the hands of these men, impairs their sense of responsibility, and develops in them a spirit of intolerance of criticism'.

One basic defect of the bureaucratic system, created and nourished by the Civilians, was red tapism. The red tape stood between the people and their *de facto* rulers. Bonds

of sympathy and understanding were loosened; the administrative machinery became slow and callous. Old ideas and accumulated precedents governed administrative practice. Lord Curzon wrote to the Secretary of State in 1903: . . . there are neither originality nor ideas nor imagination in the Indian Civil Service, and change or improvement or reform . . . sends a cold shiver down their spine'. Such were the men in whom he found (as the Resolution adopted by him in 1904 shows) an inherent capacity to govern a subject people.

The Civilians had powerful allies in the Anglo-Indian press and in the British mercantile community in India. It was a combination to which Indian nationalist opinion attributed deep-rooted hostility to India's progress towards self-government.

Non-Regulation Provinces

The administration of the Non-Regulation Provinces, such as Burma and the Punjab, had two special features. Before the passing of the Indian Councils Act of 1861 they were governed generally by laws passed by the executive authorities, not by laws passed by the Governor-General in Council. From 1861 this distinction ceased, and these provinces were legislated for as other parts of the country. But the Governor-General in Council (the Executive Council) were empowered by an Act, passed by Parliament in 1870, to make laws for 'certain territories' in special cases without reference to the Imperial Legislative Council.

Secondly, the Indian Civil Service had no monopoly of high civil posts in the Non-Regulation Provinces. Military officers were employed for civil work in Burma, Assam, Sind, the Punjab, Oudh and the Central Provinces.

Judicial system: High Courts

During the period of the Company's rule there were 'two rival sets of jurisdiction'—the King's Courts (Supreme Courts) functioning in the Presidency towns and the Company's Courts (Sadar Dewani and Sadar Nizamat Adalats) dealing with cases originating outside Presidency towns. This dual system was not only anomalous but also a source of many complications. The amalgamation of the three Courts into a single Court

was considered in connection with the renewal of the Company's Charter of 1853. It was effected by the Indian High Courts Act passed by Parliament in 1861.

Under the provisions of this Act High Courts were established in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. The Supreme Courts and the Sadar Courts were abolished, their functions and powers being vested in the High Courts. The High Courts were empowered to exercise both original and appellate jurisdiction in respect of both civil and criminal cases, and also to exercise 'superintendence over all courts' subject to their appellate jurisdiction. The power of 'superintendence' brought them into close contact with the Provincial Governments in regard to various matters connected with judicial administration.

Each High Court was to consist of a Chief Justice and not more than 15 Puisne Judges. They were to be appointed by the Crown from among four categories of persons: (1) Barristers; (2) members of the Indian Civil Service who had served as *zillah* judge; (3) officers who had served as Principal Sadar Amin or Small Causes Court judge; (4) pleaders of High Courts.

The Calcutta Chief Justice had a higher salary than the Chief Justices of Madras and Bombay. From the administrative point of view the Calcutta High Court had relations only with the Government of India, and not with the Government of Bengal, till the commencement of the Government of India Act, 1935. All other High Courts had administrative relations with the Provincial Government concerned.

In the matter of appointment of High Court Judges official policy was more or less liberal. Between 1862 and 1912 the Calcutta High Court had 15 permanent and 2 temporary Indian Judges. The first Indian to officiate as Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court was Ramesh Chandra Mitra whose promotion was due to Lord Ripon's liberal policy. No Indian was appointed permanent Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court till 1952.

Under later Acts of Parliament High Courts were established at Allahabad (1865), Patna (1916), Lahore (1919) and Nagpur (1936).

Judicial system: Ilbert Bill (1883-84)

Persons falling within the category of 'European British subjects' occupied a privileged position in respect of trial for criminal offences. They were subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. Macaulay in 1838, and Bethune in 1849, failed in their efforts to legislate on this subject owing to the strong objection of the privileged class to the abolition of their established right.

Under the Criminal Procedure Code of 1872, as also under its amendment of 1882, the term 'European British subject' included all British subjects except 'natives' of India. They were now subject to the criminal jurisdiction of European District Magistrates and Sessions Judges, but Indian members of the Indian Civil Service working as District Magistrates and Sessions Judges had no jurisdiction over them. Sir Courtenay Ilbert, Law Member in Lord Ripon's Council, prepared a Bill to remove this distinction between European and Indian members of the Indian Civil Service which was 'based merely on race distinction'. It proposed to empower all District Magistrates and Sessions Judges, as also other members of the Covenanted and Statutory Civil Services specially selected for this purpose, to exercise criminal jurisdiction on 'European British subjects'.

This was a simple administrative measure, but the European community not only in Bengal but also in other parts of India took up an attitude of 'fierce opposition'. This opposition was led by the European members of the Indian Civil Service and strongly supported by European planters, merchants and lawyers. The pressure of the European community, the lukewarm support of the majority of the members of the Executive Council, and the hesitant attitude of the 'Home' Government compelled Ripon and Ilbert to accept a compromise. The Bill in its final form (1884) provided that every 'European British subject' brought for trial before a District Magistrate or Sessions Judge would have the right to claim trial by a jury of which no less than half the number must be Europeans or Americans. Thus racial discrimination continued to be an important feature of the administration of criminal justice.

Executive and Judiciary

The exercise of judicial functions by executive officers—District Magistrates and Deputy Magistrates subordinate to them—who controlled the police was 'anomalous in theory and mischievous in practice'. The Criminal Procedure Code of 1872 gave full recognition to this system. The official view was that the union of executive and judicial functions in the hands of the District Magistrates was essential to the maintenance of their position as heads of District administration as also to the stability of British rule in India.

The Congress held the view that 'a complete separation of executive and judicial functions' was 'an urgent necessity'. Resolutions to this effect were passed—practically every year—from 1886 to 1915. In 1899 a Memorial in favour of separation was submitted to the Secretary of State by several distinguished British lawyers and Judges in England. No concrete step was taken by the Government of India to introduce separation even on a limited scale.

4. LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

Beginnings

Local Self-Government in its modern form had its beginning in the Presidency towns before the transfer of government from the Company to the Crown. By the forties of the nineteenth century it was considered necessary to enlist the co-operation of the residents in the collection and management of municipal funds. Between 1840 and 1847 laws were passed introducing the elective principle in the composition of bodies entrusted with municipal work in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. But as the elections were vitiated by gross abuses the system was abolished between 1856 and 1858. By two Acts of 1856 municipal administration was linked with police administration in the Presidency towns: the chief of the municipality was made the chief of the city police.

Sir John Lawrence (1864-69)

In 1864 the Government of Sir John Lawrence initiated a new policy in regard to Local Self-Government. It declared: 'The people of this country are perfectly capable of administering their own local affairs'. As the financial capa-

city of the Government of India to provide for improved municipal administration was limited, it was desirable that 'as much as possible of the business of the country' should be 'done by the people by means of funds raised by themselves'.

Lord Mayo (1869-72)

This declaration of principle was an anticipation—in general terms—of the more specific statement of policy in the Financial Resolution (1870) of Lord Mayo's Government. 'Local interest, supervision and care', it was stated, 'are necessary to success in the management of funds devoted to education, sanitation, medical charity, and local public works'. The Government would, therefore, 'afford opportunities for the development of self-government, for strengthening municipal institutions, and for the association of natives and Europeans, to a greater extent than heretofore, in the administration of affairs'.

This enunciation of policy was followed by changes in the municipal bodies of the Presidency towns. Between 1872 and 1878 Municipal Corporations were established in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras; provision was made for election of some of the Commissioners, and also for an elected Chairman in the case of Bombay. In all the three cities executive power and responsibility were vested in officials appointed by the Provincial Government.

Lord Ripon

Lord Ripon's period of office (1880-84), like that of Lord William Bentinck (1828-35), deserves to be remembered as an era when victories in peace were deliberately preferred to victories in war. He was every inch a typical mid-Victorian Liberal. A loyal political disciple of the great Liberal leader Gladstone, he was far more interested in dull administrative reforms than in a 'spirited foreign policy' which had attracted his predecessor, Lord Lytton. In him the idea of paternal government characteristic of British rule in India in the nineteenth century reached its climax. The transition from paternalism to partnership also began. 'Indians would now oppose Government, but in the name of Western principles; they would demand self-government, but in the form of Western institutions'.

Ripon's view was that India should be governed 'more and more by means of, and in accordance with, that growing public opinion which is beginning to show itself throughout the country'. This policy was to be given effect to through liberalization of the composition of the Legislative Councils and the extension of Local Self-Government. These two items were to be regarded as part of an integrated programme. Ripon's aim was 'to advance and promote the political and popular education of the people and to induce the best and most intelligent men in the community to come forward and take a share in the management of their own local affairs and to guide and train them in the attainment of that important object'. The officers of the Government were directed to 'foster sedulously the small beginnings of the independent political life' marked by the establishment of self-governing bodies. In promoting Local Self-Government the primary purpose was not to effect improvement in administration, but to promote political education and to prepare the ground for an 'independent political life'. The principal interest of Ripon's policy on Local Self-Government lies in his clear emphasis on its political aspect. He placed the issue on a broad basis, recognized its intrinsic importance apart from the problem of financial decentralization which had been Mayo's primary objective, and related it to the wider context of the demand for self-government.

Resolution of 1882

The new policy on Local Self-Government was laid down in a famous Resolution of Ripon's Government (1882). It emphasized two important points: extension of the principle of election, and 'control from without'. The local boards, both urban and rural, were to have 'a large preponderance of non-official members'; in no case were the official members to be more than one-third of the whole. Different methods might be chosen by the Provincial Government, such as the simple vote, the cumulative vote, election by wards, election by the whole town or tract, suffrage on more or less extended qualification, and election by caste or occupation. What Ripon wanted to secure was not 'a representation of the people of an European democratic type, but the gradual training of the best, most intelligent, and most influential men in the

community to take an interest and an active part in the management of their local affairs'.

Official control over the boards was to be 'exercised from without rather than from within'. The Government 'should revise and check the acts of the local bodies, but not dictate them'. Its sanction was to be required for certain acts, such as the raising of loans, the alienation of municipal property, etc. It should have power to interfere in particular cases and to suspend the board temporarily 'in the event of gross and continued neglect of any important duty'.

'The non-official members must be led to feel that real power is placed in their hands, and that they have real responsibility to discharge'. It was, therefore, desirable to have non-official persons acting, 'wherever practicable', as Chairmen of the local boards. But there might be places where suitable non-official persons would not be available for such responsible work, or districts where the chief executive officer of the Government should retain the Chairman's functions in his own hands.

The Resolution did not 'attach much importance' to the view, held by many District Officers, that the people of India were entirely indifferent to the principle of self-government and wanted their affairs managed for them by Government officers. Previous attempts at Local Self-Government had not produced encouraging results because there had been 'direct official interference'. Improvement might be expected if the non-official agency were more thoroughly organized and more fully trusted.

Municipalities

The implementation of Ripon's policy led to considerable extension of the elective principle. Under the Bengal Act of 1884 two-thirds of the Commissioners and the Chairman of every municipality—except some scheduled municipalities—were to be elected. The Madras Act of 1884 permitted the election of three-fourths of the Commissioners as also of the Chairman; but this permissive provision was only partly effective in practice. Under the Bombay Act of 1884 at least half the total number of Commissioners were to be elected; the President was either to be elected by the Commissioners or nominated by the Provincial Government. The North-Western Provinces Act of 1883 introduced the elective system

in the case of 98 out of 108 municipalities, and the members elected the Chairman in all except six cases. Under the Punjab Act of 1884 election remained permissive, but the proportion of non-official members was raised to two-thirds.

The results of these changes were, in the words of an official report issued by Lord Lansdowne's Government, 'fairly successful'. The electorate was restricted by property qualifications, and there was no secret ballot to protect the voters against undue influence. The legal right to elect a Chairman was not infrequently used to elect an official, usually the District Magistrate or the Sub-Divisional Officer. In fact, the election of non-official Chairmen was by no means general even on the eve of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms.

Rural Boards

Municipal organization in the urban areas was a combination of some features of English Local Government and the Mughal *Kotwali* system: civic administration was linked up with police administration. In rural areas the historical precedent for local bodies is to be found in the traditional *Panchayats*. Ripon recognized the fact that British rule had 'done a great deal to destroy' the 'indigenous system', but he tried to 'revive and extend it'. He treated the 'village system' as the 'ancient foundation' of the 'superstructure' of 'modern Local Self-Government'.

Wise administrators like Sir Thomas Munro, Governor of Madras, and Mountstuart Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay, had recognized the importance of the 'village system'. But it could not adequately serve the needs of the big administrative unit known as the district. The idea of raising funds by local taxation for expenditure on works of improvement outside municipalities took a concrete shape in Madras and Bombay in the sixties. Rural Boards were established in Madras in 1871. Financial and administrative requirements, to which Ripon added the need of 'political and popular education', led to the extension of this system to other provinces. By 1881 all provinces except British Burma had nominated District Committees, consisting both of officials and non-officials, with official Chairmen, which looked after improvement of communication, construction of schools and dispensaries, etc. The principle behind these bodies had an English ancestry.

Ripon's Resolution of 1882 stressed two new features: representation and effectiveness. The principle of election was introduced. Rural areas were to be placed on a par with urban areas. A district was considered too large for effective supervision by a single local body; it was considered desirable to give the smallest administrative unit (the sub-division) a Local Board.

Legislation seeking to implement Ripon's policy reflected provincial diversities. The Bengal Act of 1885 created a two-tier system: Local (Sub-Divisional) Board and District Board. But the Provincial Government was empowered to create Union Boards for groups of villages. Local Boards were to have elected Chairmen; District Boards would have nominated or elected Chairmen as the Provincial Government directed. The Madras Act of 1884 created a three-tier system: the Union Board, the *Taluk* Board, the District Board. The elective principle was applied initially to District Boards only. The Bombay Act of 1884 created a two-tier system: the *Taluk* Board, the District Board. The composition of the Boards was determined by indirect election. In the North-Western Provinces provision was made by an Act of 1883 for a Board in each district and a Local Board in each sub-division. The Punjab Act of 1883 provided for District Boards only; the creation of Local Boards was left to the discretion of the Provincial Government. The Central Provinces Act of 1883 created a two-tier system, leaving no scope for Union Boards.

In all provinces the rural Boards were, generally speaking, subject to greater official control than Ripon had intended. The universal practice was to place the District Magistrate at the head of the District Board as its Chairman. The Sub-Divisional or *Taluk* Boards were sometimes overshadowed by the District Boards and became indifferent to their work. In 1907 the *Tahsil* Boards in the United Provinces were abolished on the ground of their inactivity.

The lowest unit of rural self-government, the Union Board, languished for many reasons. It was a weak product of a top-heavy system. 'Rural local government was imposed from above, and the village was the last place to feel its influence'. The landholders, who exercised considerable influence in rural areas, took little interest in the new system which encroached upon their customary privileges. The agricultural classes—

generally illiterate—did not understand the complications of the law and procedure which bound the Union Boards. Old village communities lost their traditional integrity and spirit of co-operation under the impact of new revenue laws. The isolation of the villages was gradually yielding to the pressure of improvement of communications and growing contact with urban centres.

Conclusion

The Decentralization Commission, appointed by the Secretary of State, Lord Morley, in 1907, made some important recommendations for improvement of Local Self-Government. These were reviewed by the Government of Lord Hardinge II (1910-16) in a Resolution in 1915, and some general principles were laid down. Under the Government of India Act, 1919, Local Self-Government became a Transferred Subject. Laws were passed by different Provincial Legislative Councils, recognizing election as the basis of composition of all local bodies, and excluding to a large extent participation and control by Government officials. There was a visible deterioration in administrative efficiency as a result of several causes: absence of guidance from experienced officials, importation of political considerations, rivalry of religious groups as also of castes and local interests, reluctance of elected representatives to alienate popular support by increasing taxation, financial wastage and extravagance, etc. Ripon's dream remained largely unfulfilled: Local Self-Government did not become an active and stimulating agency for political education.

5. PRINCELY STATES

'Native States'

From the legal point of view the term 'British India' meant 'all territories and places within Her Majesty's dominions which are for the time being governed by Her Majesty through the Governor-General of India or through any Governor, or other officer subordinate to the Governor-General of India'. Other parts of this sub-continent (apart from Nepal, Sikim, Bhutan, and Upper Burma till 1885), which were not included in 'Her Majesty's dominions', were governed by Indian princes. These 'Native States' were connected with the British Government by treaties, engagements, *sanads*, etc. They numbered

about 700. They differed in status, powers and functions; but the political basis of their existence was subordination to the British Government. Some of them enjoyed full autonomy in their internal affairs; over others the British Government exercised, through its agents, large powers of internal control.

Suzerainty of British Crown

The Government of India Act, 1858, recognized the binding force of the Company's treaties with the 'Native States' even after the termination of its regime. The Queen's Proclamation (1858) declared that all treaties would be 'scrupulously maintained'. The relations of the 'Native States' were 'essentially relations with the British Crown and not with the Government of India'. From the end of the Company's regime the Crown conducted its relations with the 'Native States' through the Secretary of State for India and the Governor-General in Council.

Lord Canning (1856-62) wrote in 1860 that, as a result of the transfer of the government of India from the Company to the Crown, there was 'a reality in the suzerainty of the sovereign of England which had never existed before, and which is not only felt but is eagerly acknowledged by the (Indian) Chiefs'. From the doctrine of the suzerainty of the British sovereign over the 'Native States' followed the theory of 'one charge'. 'British India' and the territories of the princes, though legally separate, constituted a single unit under the British Crown which (as Canning said in 1862) 'stood forward' as 'the unquestioned Ruler and Paramount Power in India'. This meant the conversion of the princes, who were regarded as *allies* in the days of the Company, into *feudatories* of the British Crown. This was a silent revolution brought about by the political change following the 'Sepoy Mutiny'.

Adoption and titles

This 'revolution' expressed itself in a concrete form in the *Sanads* of Adoption given to the States by Canning. The princes—Hindus as well as Muslims—were authorised to adopt heirs with the right of succession to their territories. This was a repudiation of the Doctrine of Lapse. The *sanads* prescribed two conditions: loyalty to the Crown, and faithful observance of the conditions of the treaties, engagements, etc. The right to perpetuate dynastic possession was regarded by

the princes as a privilege. In fact, it was really a political method which transformed the States into 'members of a single polity over which the Government of India presided'.

The altered position of the princes was emphasized by the introduction of a new practice: the conferment of titles. The Order of the Star of India, founded in 1861, was bestowed on many princes. In later times titles were granted. The Nizam, for example, became 'His Exalted Highness'. This was a clear imitation of the Mughal practice. The Company had never asserted its suzerainty in such a pompous manner.

Royal Titles Act (1876)

As early as 1842 Lord Ellenborough contemplated the transfer of the imperial title from the Mughal 'King' to the Queen of England. In 1876 the Conservative Prime Minister of England, Disraeli, carried through Parliament the Royal Titles Bill which empowered the Queen 'to make addition' to her 'style and title'. The new title was not stated in the Act, but Disraeli disclosed in his speech that it was to be 'Empress of India'. The political value of the imperial title was emphasized; it established a personal contact between the British sovereign and the Indian people. 'The British *Raj* in India received a significant accession of internal and external strength; a new and durable link was forged between the crowned democracy of the West and the immemorial Empire of the Middle East.'

In 1877 Lord Lytton held a magnificent Durbar at Delhi to announce the Queen's assumption of the title of 'Empress of India'. He had definite political objectives. He felt that the subordinate position of the States should be more distinctly defined, and their resources should be 'gradually brought into closer and more systematic co-operation with the Supreme Government'. In 1903, at a second Delhi Durbar, Edward VII was proclaimed 'King Emperor'. At a third Durbar held at Delhi in 1911 George V announced the 'transfer of the seat of the Government of India from Calcutta to the ancient capital Delhi'. All the three Durbars were held at Delhi, which in those days had no importance except association in popular memory with the buried past, and not in Calcutta which was the political, commercial and cultural capital of India.

Intervention

After 1858 there were three cases of restoration of territory to the 'native princes'. In 1859 Garhwal was regranted even though the Chief had died without leaving any legitimate heir. The fort of Gwalior, occupied by the British forces in 1858, was restored to Sindhia in 1886. The most important case was that of Mysore. This State had been brought under direct British administration by Lord William Bentinck, but the ruling dynasty was not thrown out. After the death of the nominal Maharaja in 1868, his adopted son attained majority in 1881 and was installed as *de facto* ruler. Although British administration was withdrawn, the new Maharaja was deprived of some of the rights and privileges which his predecessors had enjoyed. All former treaties etc. were superseded by a new Instrument of Accession (1881) which required the Maharaja to 'remain faithful in allegiance and subordination' to the Queen and imposed new restrictions on his powers and functions. The British Government's right to interfere in the internal administration of Mysore became practically unlimited. In the event of the breach or non-observance of any of the conditions of restoration of the Maharaja, the British Government would be entitled to resume the direct administration of his territory.

The treaties concluded in the days of the Company generally contained provisions against interference by the British Government in the internal affairs of the States. The Company's Government had in practice violated these provisions in many cases, but after 1858 the right of interference began to be claimed as a matter of the suzerain's inherent privilege. Caning stated that the Government of India might interfere in order to 'set right' serious administrative abuses which 'threatened any part of the country with anarchy and disturbance'. Moreover, the Government of India had the 'right to visit a State with the highest penalties, even confiscation, in the event of disloyalty or flagrant breach of agreement'. Similar statements were made by some later Governors-General.

Several cases of intervention and penalization occurred in the four decades following the 'Sepoy Mutiny'. In 1865 the ruler of Jabwa in Central India was fined and deprived of his salute for permitting mutilation of a thief. In 1867 the Nawab of Tonk in Rajasthan was deposed for complicity in a murder-

ous affray, but his son was allowed to succeed. In 1870 the ruler of Alwar in Rajasthan, who had provoked a rebellion against the Council of Regency recognized by the Government of India, was deprived of his authority and the State was placed virtually under the administration of the Political Agent. In 1892 the Khan of Kalat in Baluchistan was replaced by his son because he had inflicted brutal punishment on some persons.

Baroda

Far more significant than the action taken against these four small States was the deposition of the Gaikwad of Baroda (1875), one of the leading princes in the country. A Commission appointed by the Government of India reported in 1874 that there was serious misgovernment in the State. Malhar Rao Gaikwad was warned that if he did not reform the administration by 31 December 1875 he would be 'deposed from power'. He appointed as his Dewan Dadabhai Naoroji who was later to earn great reputation as a nationalist leader. The progress of reforms was interrupted by differences between the Gaikwad and the Dewan, leading finally to the latter's resignation.

Meanwhile the Resident, Colonel Phayre, who had been consistently hostile to the Gaikwad, complained that an attempt had been made to poison him. The evidence collected by the Commissioner of Police, Bombay, disclosed a *prima facie* case of attempted poisoning in which the Gaikwad was personally involved. Malhar Rao was arrested; the administration of the State was put in charge of Phayre's successor as Resident. A Commission was appointed with the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court as Chairman and five members (two Englishmen and three Indians). The Chairman and the two English members found Malhar Rao guilty, one Indian member concluded that he was in no way implicated in attempted poisoning, and the other two held that the charges were not proved. The disagreement among the members of the Commission placed the British authorities in a difficult position. The case provoked strong reactions in the Anglo-Indian as also in the Indian press. While the former expressed views hostile to the Gaikwad, the latter expressed strong pro-Gaikwad sentiments. The Secretary of State considered that it would be politically wise to formally ignore the divergent views of the members of the Commission and to depose Malhar Rao 'on the

ground of his unfitness to govern and the bad moral effect of restoring him'. So Malhar Rao was deposed, his issue was perpetually excluded from succession, and a son adopted by the widow of his predecessor was recognized as the ruler of the State. The Secretary of State linked this drastic measure with the Paramount Power's obligation of 'protecting the people of India from oppression'

Manipur

In the case of Manipur Paramountcy asserted itself in an extreme form without any basis in treaties or engagements. Manipur had never paid tribute; but in 1890 a palace revolution in the State created a political crisis, and in order to justify intervention the Government of India declared that it was 'a subordinate and protected State which owed submission to the Paramount Power'. As a consequence of dissensions between two political factions in the State five Englishmen, including the Chief Commissioner of Assam and the Political Agent, were murdered. This was treated as a case of waging war against the Queen Empress. and Tikendrajit, a member of the ruling family, was executed. The State, however, was not annexed.

Kashmir

Kashmir occupied a special position under the treaty of Amritsar (1846). It had no British Resident, and the rulers always claimed 'independent' status. The penetration of Russian influence into Central Asia increased the strategic importance of Kashmir, and the Government of India considered it necessary to place a Resident at Srinagar. At first an 'officer on special duty', then a full-fledged Resident, came to Kashmir to watch over British political interest. This happened during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Northbrook, Lord Ripon and Lord Dufferin. Bad administration and famine led to a steady deterioration in internal situation and called for reforms. Moreover, there were charges against the Maharaja of involvement in Russian intrigues. The result was his resignation (1889). A Council of Regency was set up on the ground of maladministration; the State was placed under the immediate supervision of the Resident.

'Co-operation and union'

The traditional policy of the British Government was to keep the States in 'subordinate isolation'. The princes were

treated as potential malcontents. Their military forces were watched with suspicion; for instance, in 1844 number limits were prescribed for Sindhia's troops. But the services rendered by the princes during the 'Sepoy Mutiny' brought about a change of policy. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century a new spirit of 'co-operation and union' developed in the relation between the Paramount Power and the States.

During the Panjdeh war scare in 1885 some princes offered their troops for service against Russia. This led to the formation of the Imperial Service Troops, employed for the first time in the Hunza campaign of 1893. These troops were maintained and formally controlled by the States concerned; but they were trained by British officers lent by the Government of India and placed under the orders of the Commander-in-Chief when on active service. The British Government no longer considered the existence of State armies as a danger. In 1914 there were 22,000 Imperial Service Troops maintained by 29 States. Some of the leading States, such as Baroda, Indore and Travancore, kept aloof on the ground that the scheme was an encroachment upon their rights.

The virtual merger of a section of State troops in the British Indian Army was an impressive demonstration of the 'one charge' doctrine in action. It gave 'actual and useful expression to the feeling of community of interests'. The association of the princes with the British imperial system took other forms as well. For instance, the Maharaja of Patiala and the Dewans of two States were nominated by the Governor-General as members of his Legislative Council. Another step, officially contemplated for the first time by Lord Lytton, was the constitution of an Imperial Privy Council consisting of some of the leading princes who were to be consulted by the Governor-General on matters of common interest. Instead of following the Company's principle of keeping the States isolated, he desired to draw them into a consultative group under the aegis of the representative of the Crown. Lord Curzon wanted a Council of Ruling Princes, composed exclusively of princes who maintained Imperial Service Troops. He wrote in 1899: 'The Native Chief has become, by our policy, an integral factor in the Imperial organization of India'. Lord Minto (1905-10) stressed the 'identity of interests between the Imperial Government and the Durbars' and formulated a scheme for an

Imperial Advisory Council composed of ruling princes and territorial magnates. The plans of these three Viceroys were not implemented due to the disapproval of the Secretaries of State, but they anticipated the formation of the Chamber of Princes in 1921.

Administration in States

Meanwhile, other factors were bringing the States closer to British India. There was growing co-operation in the fields of administration, extension of communications, and economic policy. Mysore was the most outstanding example of a State which improved its indigenous administrative system under the guidance of British officers. Similar healthy changes occurred in smaller principalities which were placed under the direct administration of British officers during the minority of the rulers. The indirect impact on the States of modern methods of administration in the British provinces was an important factor in the clearance of accumulated abuses as also in the development of modern ideas and techniques.

Some States borrowed officers trained in British India 'to revise or supervise their revenue or financial administration or to improve their agriculture or irrigation'. Many States adopted British Indian civil and military codes. Some of them imitated the British Indian educational system. Schools and Colleges in the States were affiliated to British Indian Universities. Agreements were concluded between the Government of India and the States in regard to railways, posts and telegraphs, irrigation canals, production and distribution of salt, preservation of forests, suppression of smuggling, freedom of trade, coinage, extradition, etc. Thus developed an increasing 'range of matters in which the States realized their solidarity with British India'.

In a few States were found the beginnings of representative institutions of the British Indian pattern. Mysore and Travancore had Legislative Councils. Hyderabad had a Council of State. No State in North India had a Legislature; but there were municipal bodies in Baroda, Gwalior, Indore, Bhopal, and some States in Rajasthan.

Despite these changes the characteristic feature of all States, 'including the most advanced', remained 'the personal rule of the prince and his control over legislation and the administra-

tion of justice'. Successive Governors-General urged the princes to improve the administration of their States. Curzon said in 1899: 'He (i.e., the ruler) must justify and not abuse the authority committed to him, he must be the servant as well as the master of his people'. Lord Minto stated in 1909 that the Government of India could not 'incur reproach of being an indirect instrument of misrule' in the States by supporting princes who could not maintain 'soundness of administration'.

CHAPTER 2

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (1858-1939)

I. AFGHANISTAN, RUSSIA AND PERSIA

'London control of foreign policy'

As the Government of India occupied a subordinate position in relation to the 'Home' Government in London, it could not really have a foreign policy or external policy of its own. It had to co-ordinate the foreign relations of the country in its charge with those of the British Empire as a whole, and this necessitated formulation of a common policy by the British Cabinet. That common policy naturally took into consideration the security of British India; and on this point the Government of India, being the authority on the spot, naturally carried much weight even though London had the final say. Again, the Government of India was concerned solely with the relations with India's neighbours; therefore, its foreign relations had geographical limits. It had no ambassadors even in the neighbouring countries, although it could appoint agents or conduct relations with them through officers posted in its own territories. Subject to these limitations, the Government of India could generally play an active role on account of the great distance between Britain and India and the consequent delay in communication. The 'Home' Government could only formulate the policy in broad outline, leaving the Government of India comparatively free to execute it in the light of political exigencies and rapidly developing situations.

This freedom was lost to a considerable extent after the Red Sea cable was laid in 1870. Previously the Government of India could confront the authorities in London 'with accomplished facts, with a formal declaration of war or annexation of territory, in which they could not but acquiesce, however reluctantly'. But from 1870 onwards telegraph and cable annihilated distance, and it became possible—and practically compulsory—for the Government of India to ask for London's previous sanction for whatever measure it considered necessary even in very urgent matters relating to foreign policy. Even then Lord Lytton acted beyond instructions in the case of the Second Anglo-Afghan War, and Lord Curzon tried in the case of Tibet 'to restore to the Government of India the phantom

of its old authority'. But the new situation confirmed London's direct control over India's foreign policy and enabled the 'Home' authorities even to ignore the Government of India, as they did in the case of negotiations leading to the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 which directly affected India.

Lord Morley, speaking as Secretary of State for India, observed that England 'cannot have two foreign policies'. What he meant was that the British Empire, as a single political unit, must have a single foreign policy which must be framed in London. This was necessary if Britain was to take co-ordinated and effective action in the series of international crises during the period 1870-1914 which culminated in the First Great War. There was an important internal political factor as well. Foreign policy was 'the one aspect of Indian political affairs which was capable of exciting interest in Britain'. The Opposition accused the British Cabinet of unnecessary aggressiveness against the Afghans and the Frontier tribes. In order to meet such charges the Cabinet had to control the policy of the Government of India, for it could not assume responsibility for that Government's uncontrolled measures.

The North-West: two problems

On the north-west the Government of India had to face two distinct, but not entirely unconnected problems. One was an imperial problem: the security of the frontier. The conquest of Sind and the Punjab had extended the boundaries of British India to Afghanistan, a politically unsettled country. Behind it lay the expanding empire of Russia—Britain's enemy in the Crimean War—in Central Asia. 'Russian aspirations, real or imaginary, became increasingly important as her outposts in Central Asia approached Afghanistan. India was gradually drawn into the vortex of Anglo-Russian rivalry which was a dominant feature of international relations till 1907.

The other problem was local in character: control of the turbulent Pathan and Baluch tribes occupying the almost inaccessible hills and valleys between the Indus and Afghanistan. Over some of these tribes the Amir of Kabul claimed suzerainty. Moreover, religion served as a link between the tribes and the Amir's subjects. There was no clearly recognized boundary between British India and the Amir's territory. These factors affected the relations between the Government of India and

the Amir. Two divergent views developed among British officials in India. The 'Forward School' advocated advance into tribal territory and fixation of a suitable frontier which would make it possible for the British to control and civilize the tribes. The extreme upholders of this view, like Lord Lytton, 'painted a fancy prospect (of) bequeathing to India the supremacy of Central Asia and the revenues of a first-class power'. The 'Non-intervention School', on the other hand, argued that the mountainous country between Russia's Central Asian territories and British India formed a difficult barrier for a modern army. It was, therefore, advisable in the interest of India's security to interfere as little as possible either with Afghanistan or with the independent tribes. Both Schools founded their arguments on inadequate knowledge of geographical and political facts, as also on an exaggerated estimate of Russian ambition in Central Asia. To both, however, the tribal problem appeared to be closely linked with the imperial problem.

Expansion of Russia

Behind Russia's advance into Central Asia lay the urge for commercial and territorial gains which was a general feature of imperialism in the nineteenth century. For the rude people of Central Asia Russian predominance seemed to 'involve no violent change', for the government and social organization Russia was essentially Oriental, and 'in power and functions the Emperor at St. Petersburg was a cousin of the Oriental monarchs'.

By 1854 the Russians had reached the valley of the Ili river which flows into Lake Balkash. The Crimean War (1854-56) for a time stopped their advance, but it was resumed after the war. In 1864 Russian power touched the borders of Khokand, Bokhara and Khiva. Between 1865 and 1869 Tashkent, Samarkand and Bokhara were occupied; the Russians firmly planted themselves on the banks of the Oxus. In 1867 the province of Russian Turkestan was constituted, with General Kaufmann as its Governor-General. In 1873 Khiva submitted, placing in the hands of Russia the management of its external relations.

The Russian expansion in Central Asia had grave political and military implications for British India. 'The administra-

tion established to manage these new possessions and control these new dependencies was purely military, and all reports went to the War Office at St. Petersburg'. 'Such military organization made for further territorial expansion', for 'military governors could not look for rewards and promotion by peaceful administration'. Moreover, the continuous process of expansion was regarded by the Russians as a political necessity in the context of their unfriendly relations with England. The British could strike at them in Europe 'by means of continental alliances', but they could not reach England anywhere in Europe because she was cut off from the continent by the sea. So the Russian military position in Turkestan could be used to keep England in check by the threat of intervention in India.

It is more than doubtful whether Russia really intended an invasion of British India, or even of Afghanistan, although Russophobia was strong in British military and political circles. The semi-civilized Turkoman tribes whom Russia tried to control did not respect artificial political frontiers. There was really no satisfactory frontier for the Russians north of the Hindu Kush, and a push towards the Hindu Kush would bring them to the borders of Afghanistan. The Russian Chancellor, Prince Gortchakoff, wrote in 1864: 'Russia, in approaching Afghanistan, was influenced by the same imperious law that had led the armies of Great Britain across the plains of Hindustan and the Punjab till they reached the mountains'. The possibility of Afghanistan falling under Russian influence alarmed the British.

Afghan affairs

During the First Anglo-Afghan War the British made an attempt to convert the Hindu Kush into a wall for India's defence by placing Afghanistan under a subordinate ruler. That attempt failed. Dost Muhammad Khan returned to Kabul. He was unable to forget his defeat and humiliation, and his relations with the British remained 'undefined but sullen'. In 1849 he joined the Sikhs in their war against the British, occupied Peshawar and took part in the battle of Gujarat. After the failure of this adventure he tried to consolidate his kingdom by resisting Persian encroachment and conquering Herat and Kandahar. The Persian-Afghan rivalry

over Herat (1852-54) was a matter of serious concern for the Government of India, for the Shah of Persia listened to Russian overtures for co-operation in the Crimean War. Lord Dalhousie, anxious to make Afghanistan 'an effectual barrier against Russian aggression', concluded a treaty with Dost Muhammad Khan in 1855. The Government of India bound itself not to interfere with the Amir's territories, while he in turn agreed to be 'the friend of the friends and the enemy of the enemies' of the Company. In 1856 the Persians seized Herat. A British force was despatched against the Persians, and the Amir was assisted with money and arms. The Persians soon sued for peace. By the treaty of Paris (1857) the Shah agreed 'to relinquish all claims of sovereignty over ... Herat and the countries of Afghanistan'. The Russians, however, took care to include in the treaty a provision excluding English Consuls from the ports on the Caspian Sea, on the ground that their appointment could have none but a political object.

Dost Muhammad Khan demonstrated his amity with his British ally by abstaining from exploiting the difficulties of the Company during the 'Sepoy Mutiny'. He occupied Herat in 1863, ignoring the disapproval of the Governor-General, Lord Elgin (1862-63), who withdrew the British Agent from Kabul, and died immediately afterwards.

Although Dost Muhammad Khan (who died in 1863) had designated his son Sher Ali as successor, a fratricidal war followed his death; now one, now another, of his sixteen sons gained the upper ground. Afzal Khan and Azim Khan rebelled against Sher Ali in 1864; Azim Khan and his nephew Abdur Rahman rose in 1865; Sher Ali was driven from Kabul in 1866, and from Kandahar in 1867, but he recovered both cities in 1868. Azim Khan fled to Persia, where he died soon afterwards. Abdur Rahman Khan fled to Tashkent, where he became a Russian pensionary. Sher Ali consolidated his authority and remained undisturbed till Lord Lytton's aggressive policy led to his fall.

Lord Lawrence: 'Masterly Inactivity'

This ferocious civil war in Afghanistan coincided with the Governor-Generalship of Sir John (later Lord) Lawrence (1864-69). His name is closely associated with the policy of 'Non-intervention' which had, in fact, been initiated by Lord

Canning as early as 1857. The role which he had played in the Punjab during the 'Sepoy Mutiny', his 'vigour of character and singleness of purpose', heightened his prestige in British political and official circles; 'his opinions were accepted as oracles'. He was the only member of the Civil Service who filled the office of Governor-General permanently after the retirement of Sir John Shore in 1798.

Towards Afghanistan Lawrence steadily pursued the policy of 'Masterly Inactivity'. Its essence was absolute non-interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. His firm belief was that there could be no true friendship between the Government of India and the Amir of Kabul; no involvement in Afghan affairs was, therefore, advisable. The civil war could not be entirely ignored. So he adopted the policy of 'friendship towards the actual rulers combined with rigid abstention from interference in domestic feuds'. In 1864 Sher Ali was recognized as Amir of Afghanistan. In 1866 he was recognized as ruler of Kandahar and Herat while Afzal Khan was recognized as ruler of Kabul. In 1867 Afzal Khan was recognized as ruler of Kabul and Kandahar while Sher Ali was recognized as ruler of Herat.

This policy has been criticised as 'waiting upon events'; whether such 'inactivity' was really 'masterly' is open to question. 'Friendship towards the actual rulers' involved three dangers. First, it indirectly encouraged rebellion against the established authority in Afghanistan, for every successful rebel expected that he would receive British recognition. Secondly, 'rigid abstention from interference in domestic feuds' left all contestants for power dissatisfied, for every one of them expected British aid. Sher Ali was bitter about British indifference towards his interests. Thirdly, the rivals could—and did—apply to Russia and Persia for help. The civil war in Afghanistan could not be viewed in isolation from the advance of Russia towards the frontier of that politically unsettled country.

The policy of 'Masterly Inactivity' was modified in the light of the possibility of Russian interference in Afghan affairs. Lawrence proposed, and secured the 'Home' Government's approval for, the policy of 'giving to any *de facto* ruler of Kabul some arms and ammunitions and substantial pecuniary assistance, as well as moral support, as occasion may require, but without any formal or defensive alliance'. Accordingly,

Lawrence subsidised Sher Ali, who with this aid speedily crushed his rivals. He also offered to meet the Amir and discuss with him the political situation. This meeting was held after his retirement by his successor, Lord Mayo.

'Forward Policy'

It was fortunate for the British that there was no Russian or Persian interference in the Afghan civil war and Afghanistan emerged as a united country under Sher Ali. But the formation of the province of Russian Turkestan and the Russian occupation of Bokhara stimulated Russophobia. As early as 1844 Brigadier-General John Jacob had prepared a scheme to push forward the frontier of India through the Bolan Pass to Quetta in Baluchistan foreshadowing its ultimate advance to Herat. This 'Forward Policy' was given a definite and larger shape by Sir Henry Rawlinson in a memorandum written in 1868. His basic premise was that the Russian advance to the Oxus was a challenge to the British power in Asia and a grave danger to the security of British India. He discounted the possibility of direct Russian invasion of India through Kabul; but the presence of Russian military forces on the Oxus and Russia's 'dominant political influence' in Afghanistan were, in his opinion, serious dangers. He regarded Herat as the key to India and urged its protection from falling into Russian hands. For this purpose it was necessary to replace 'Masterly Inactivity' by a positive policy towards Afghanistan. The Amir should be provided with an annual subsidy and supplied with arms and British officers for training his army. A British envoy should be posted at Kabul. Moreover, the communications to the Afghan frontier should be improved and Quetta should be occupied and fortified. Afghanistan was to be 'brought within the orbit of British influence', and the Herat-Hindukush line was to be treated as India's scientific frontier.

Lawrence, like Sir Herbert Edwardes and many officials, thought that the imposition of Russian rule over the 'nomad barbarism' of Central Asia did not indicate a Russian scheme to invade India. He regarded the British occupation of advanced posts like Quetta, Kandahar and Herat as militarily unsound. He was not prepared to station a British envoy at Kabul or to 'enter into anything like defensive alliance' with the Amir. He thought that friendly relations could be established with the Amir by assuring him that the Government of

India was 'interested in the security of his dominions from foreign invasion' and was 'prepared to support his independence' provided he remained 'strictly faithful to his engagements.'

The difficulties arising out of the Russian advance towards the Afghan frontier could be removed—so Lawrence believed—by an agreement between England and Russia to treat Afghanistan as a State beyond the Russian sphere of interest. Russia should be given to understand that 'it cannot be permitted to interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan, or in those of any State which lies contiguous to our frontiers'. Such negotiations with Russia could be undertaken only by the 'Home' Government. Negotiations between London and St. Petersburg in 1869 revealed that Russia was prepared to treat Afghanistan as a neutral zone—a zone to 'preserve the two empires from contact'—if England recognized exclusive and complete Russian control down to the northern bank of the Oxus. England objected to this arrangement on the ground that the frontiers of Afghanistan were 'ill-defined'. However, an agreement was concluded in 1873 by which the Oxus was accepted as the northern boundary of Afghanistan and Russia recognized Badakhshan as part of the Afghan kingdom. 'The Russian policy now was to advance up to the effective borders of Afghanistan, and to get rid altogether of the uncontrolled or unoccupied territory in that area'. The point that England gained was an admission that Russia recognized Afghanistan as beyond her sphere of interest.

Ambala Durbar (1869)

Sher Ali was described by Lord Lytton, an unfriendly critic, as 'a savage with a touch of insanity'. He did not possess his father's political acumen. Embittered by the fierce struggle for power and still troubled by many enemies, open and secret, he did not conceal his anxiety for English support. When Lord Mayo met him at Ambala (1869) in accordance with an arrangement made by Lawrence, he sought two definite advantages. The first was a treaty of alliance binding the British to support him against external attack. The second was British recognition, as heir, of his younger son Abdulla Jan instead of his elder son Yaqub Khan. He also asked for a fixed annual subsidy. Mayo gave nothing but vague promises of friendship and support. Instead of a treaty the Amir got a letter stating that the Government of India would 'view with severe displeasure any attempt on the part of your rivals to disturb your

position as ruler of Kabul', and that it would 'further endeavour . . . to strengthen (his) government'. He was assured that his application for aid would be treated 'with consideration and respect'. The question of Abdulla Jan's succession was evaded.

This was a continuation of the policy followed by Lawrence; the spokesmen of the 'Forward School' were disappointed. Sher Ali returned to Kabul very much discontented; the only positive result of the meeting was the favourable impression made upon him by Mayo's personal charm and winning manners. Moreover, the splendour and military power of British India made a deep impression on his mind.

Lord Northbrook

Sher Ali's feeling of 'romantic friendship' for Mayo had no long-term impact on his policy. Lord Northbrook (1872-76), Mayo's successor, offended Sher Ali in two matters. The Government of India had undertaken the task of arbitrating on the boundary claims of the Persians and the Afghans in Seistan. The decision went in some details against Afghanistan. The Amir felt that 'his interests had been sacrificed to the cause of Anglo-Persian amity'. Secondly, the Governor-General declined to recognize Abdulla Jan whom Sher Ali had installed as heir-apparent.

The Russian conquest of Khiva (1873), the steady advance of Russia into the Turkoman country from a port on the Caspian Sea, and the development of modern means of communication within the Russian zone created fresh feelings of alarm in Kabul. Sher Ali sent a minister to Simla to inquire from the Viceroy whether the British would help him with money and arms in the event of a Russian invasion. Northbrook was impressed by the Amir's alarm and the reasonableness of his expectation of British aid. He was prepared to assure him of aid in money, arms and troops 'to expel an unprovoked invasion' if he 'unreservedly accepted and acted upon British advice in all external relations'. But the 'Home' Government did not accept the Viceroy's view, for it was convinced that the Amir had no cause of alarm because Russia had guaranteed the exclusion of Afghanistan from its sphere of interest. Northbrook was instructed to give the Amir merely a general assurance that the British Government would maintain its 'settled policy in Afghanistan'.

Disappointed alike by the British Government's complaisance towards the Russian advance, the set back in Seistan and the non-recognition of Abdulla Jan as heir, Sher Ali naturally turned to Russia which had never ceased to take interest in Afghan affairs. From 1870 onwards Kaufmann, the Russian Governor-General of Turkestan, had been sending him friendly letters which, however, were of a complimentary character. Sher Ali did not keep the matter a secret from the Government of India. 'It is impossible to determine whether he meant to establish a definite alliance with Russia, or merely intended to use Kaufmann's overtures as a means to alarm England and thereby force her to concede those demands which she had hitherto refused to grant; or whether he tried to gain security by balancing one great power against another'. *Policy-making in London*

The Liberal Party was in power in England during the years 1868-74, and Gladstone was at the head of the Cabinet as Prime Minister. He was in favour of a pacific foreign policy. Anxious to avoid confrontation with Russia in Central Asia, he supported the views of the 'Non-intervention School' in regard to Afghan affairs. So Mayo and Northbrook declined to make definite commitments to Sher Ali in pursuance of the policy laid down by the 'Home' Government.

In 1874 the Liberal Government was succeeded by a Conservative Government with Disraeli as Prime Minister. It was in power till 1880. Disraeli inaugurated a 'spirited foreign policy', repudiating Gladstone's pacific ideas and laying stress on England's 'imperial destiny'. 'Without her word nothing should be done in Europe. Still more distinctly, he aspired to make his country, instead of Russia, the imperial mistress of the East'. Russia was not only consolidating and extending its power in Central Asia. It was aiming at establishing control over Turkey, thereby endangering British naval supremacy in the Mediterranean and British hold over the Suez Canal which had become England's main channel of communication with its empire in the East.

A change in British policy towards Russia and Afghanistan was called for, from the Conservative point of view, and it was brought about by the new Secretary of State for India, Lord Salisbury. He adopted the line of argument previously put forward by the 'Forward School'. Observing that the information available from Afghanistan was neither adequate

nor reliable, he asked Northbrook to procure the Amir's assent to the establishment of a British Agency at Herat, to which one at Kandahar might be added later, and to send a temporary mission to Kabul. Northbrook pointed out that such measures would rouse the suspicion of the Amir who had sincere friendship for the British and 'no desire to prefer the friendship of other powers'. He advocated 'steady adherence to the patient and conciliatory policy which had been pursued by the Government of India for many years'. He expressed his 'firm opinion' that any attempt to force the Amir to receive a British Agent in his country was likely to bring about 'another unnecessary and costly war' in Afghanistan. But Salisbury ignored this prophetic warning of the Liberal Viceroy and insisted upon the implementation of his policy. Northbrook resigned; Lytton was selected as his successor.

Lord Lytton

Lord Lytton (1876-80) was a man of literature; he had little diplomatic experience, no interest in high politics, and no knowledge of Indian affairs. But he was 'not required to have an Indian policy; one had been prepared for him in advance, and he was selected as the likeliest instrument for executing it'. He functioned as a convinced believer in the 'Forward School' as also in Russia's 'anticipated conquest of the rich plains of India'. He worked steadfastly in 'the passionate pursuit of the object which he had been sent to India to effect—the virtual subordination of Afghanistan to India'. He formulated and executed his plans 'with the zeal of a neophyte' and 'in some respects far surpassed both Salisbury and Disraeli'.

Lytton came with definite instructions to overcome Sher Ali's 'apparent reluctance' to accept permanent British Agencies in his country in return for an increased subsidy, a definite recognition of his chosen heir (Abdulla Jan), and an explicit pledge of support in case of foreign aggression. But Sher Ali's 'apparent reluctance' to enter into permanent diplomatic relations with the British Government was not shaken. His view was that a British Agent could not be received without granting a similar right to Russia. Lytton held that this showed the Amir's 'contemptuous disregard of British interest'. Sher Ali's objections were explained to the Viceroy by the Indian Agent in Kabul whom he sent to Simla (October 1876). There Lytton demanded, in return for the concessions wanted by the Amir, that

he should (1) accept a British Resident at Kabul or special missions whenever required, (2) allow British Agents to be posted at Herat and elsewhere, (3) open Afghanistan freely to all Englishmen—officials and non-officials—and provide for their safety, and (4) abstain from holding any communication with any foreign power, specially Russia, without the knowledge of the Government of India. He spoke in haughty and dictatorial terms, and hinted that if the Amir rejected his terms, Afghanistan might be 'wiped out of the map altogether' through partition of the country by agreement between England and Russia. He told the Agent that if Sher Ali became an enemy of England, British military power 'could break him as a reed'. This offensive statement was intended to be communicated to the Amir.

Apparently as a result of the Indian Agent's representation to the Amir on his return to Kabul, a conference was arranged at Peshawar between the British plenipotentiary, Sir Lewis Pelly, and an Afghan envoy (January-March 1877). The conference proved abortive. During the next few months there was a complete break in political relations between British India and Afghansitan.

About this time Lytton was clearly preparing for a forward movement along the boundaries of British India, and for the possibility of an aggressive war in Afghanistan'. By a treaty arranged by John Jacob in 1854 the Khan (Chief) of Kalat in Baluchistan had become a protected ruler under the Company. Taking advantage of continuous internal disorder in the country (with which Lawrence, Mayo and Northbrook had declined to interfere in a coercive manner), Lytton secured the Khan's consent to the treaty of Jacobabad (December 1876) which provided for the 'permanent occupation' of his territory by a British military force. Quetta, a military centre of great strategic importance, was occupied in 1877. Along with the occupation of Quetta, British influence was strengthened in Chitral and Gilgit. It was Lytton's idea—condemned by Salisbury as 'crude excursions of an untutored fancy'—to hold Kabul, Ghazni and Jalalabad as our principal bastion, with Quetta as a curtain, and advanced posts at Khandahar, Herat, Balkh, etc.'

The penetration of the British military power into strategic areas on the south-east and north-east of Afghanistan meant

military encirclement of that country on the Indian side. In the frontier areas roads were constructed or repaired, new bridges were made and old ones expanded, and huge military stores were accumulated at Rawalpindi and Kohat.

Sher Ali naturally became uneasy. He sent some troops to Kandahar as a reply to the British garrisoning of Quetta. Lytton withdrew the Indian Agent from Kabul, justifying this unfriendly measure on the alleged ground that the Amir had 'launched a *jihad* (religious war) against his English rather than his Russian neighbours'. In July 1877 he wrote that 'the time may come (and at no very distant date) when, in order to maintain the British power in India, it will be absolutely necessary to undertake the military occupation of western Afghanistan (whether with or without the consent of the ruler of that country) including the important fortress of Herat'.

Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-80)

Events in Europe hastened the crisis which Lytton had been trying to promote with a view to bringing Sher Ali to his knees. The Russo-Turkish War broke out in April 1877. Within a few months Turkey was beaten on all fronts, and Russian troops came within reach of Constantinople. Although Gladstone, speaking for the Liberal Party which was then in opposition, led an agitation against the Turks who were guilty of unspeakable atrocities against their Bulgarian subjects, Disraeli decided to prevent Russia from realizing its old dream of occupying Constantinople. He made preparations for war. But Russia, instead of marching on Constantinople, forced Turkey in March 1878 to accept the humiliating treaty of San Stefano. Disraeli met this situation by compelling Russia to submit the terms of the treaty to a Congress of European powers. He used the threat of war and summoned Indian troops to Malta, demonstrating India's role in broad issues of British imperial defence. The treaty of San Stefano was replaced by the treaty of Berlin (July 1878) after discussion at the European Congress. Russia lost some of its gains secured by the treaty of San Stefano, Turkey was saved, and England made considerable political and diplomatic gains—including the acquisition of Cyprus—without actual fighting. Disraeli proudly claimed that he had secured 'Peace with Honour'.

Before the finalization of the treaty of Berlin the Russians, foiled by England in Europe, tried 'to keep England in check by the threat of intervention in India'. They tried to develop

the friendly intercourse with Afghanistan which had been carried on since 1870 through Kaufmann's correspondence from Turkestan. In June 1878 he wrote to Sher Ali that the external relations of Afghanistan required 'deep consideration' and he was sending a Russian officer named Stolietoff 'to inform you of all that is hidden in my mind'. At the same time three columns of troops marched from Tashkent in the direction of the Afghan frontiers. Sher Ali immediately issued orders forbidding the Russian envoy to enter Afghanistan. But Stolietoff reached Kabul in July 1878. A few days earlier the treaty of Berlin had been finalized. Kaufmann recalled the troops and instructed Stolietoff not to make any positive engagement with the Amir. It is significant that the Russian envoy, instead of being withdrawn, was allowed to stay at Kabul and carry on negotiations with the Amir for about two months. The exact nature of these negotiations is not known. The Russian Government, as subsequent events proved, had no intention of binding itself to go to war with England in case of a dispute between the Amir and the Government of India.

Whatever the object of Stolietoff's mission might be, it enabled Lytton to obtain the 'Home' Government's approval for his insisting on Sher Ali's acceptance of an English mission. But while Disraeli desired to proceed cautiously and reopen negotiations with Russia for a settlement regarding Central Asia, the Viceroy acted impetuously so that he could at last secure a chance of dismembering Afghanistan.

A letter announcing that an English envoy would be sent arrived in Kabul on 17 August 1878. Abdulla Jan, Sher Ali's heir-apparent, died the same day. This naturally delayed the Amir's reply. Instead of waiting for that reply the Viceroy's chosen envoy, Neville Chamberlain, proceeded to the frontier. On 21 September 1878 an Afghan officer stopped the advance guard of the mission at Ali Masjid saying that he must await orders from Kabul. On 2 November 1878 the Viceroy sent an ultimatum demanding a full apology and the immediate reception of the mission. In a reply dated 19 November 1878, received on 30 November 1878, the Amir accepted the mission but offered no apology. Already (21 November 1878) three English armies had begun advance upon Afghanistan—one from Quetta upon Kandahar, one through the Kurram valley, and one through the Khyber Pass.

'In the despatch of the Chamberlain mission Lytton had overruled the wishes of Disraeli (who had become Lord Beaconsfield) and Salisbury'. Salisbury had assured Disraeli that 'under no circumstances was the Khyber Pass to be attempted'. The 'Home' authorities expected the mission to proceed by way of the Bolan Pass and Kandahar, where Afghan 'opposition would have been more difficult and unlikely'; but the Viceroy chose the 'more provocative' Khyber route. The Ali Masjid incident was described by Lytton as a demonstration of the Amir's policy 'to make fools of us in the sight of all Central Asia and all India'. In order to 'force the Amir to change his policy' he appealed to arms.

Sher Ali was not prepared for war, nor was Russia prepared to come to his rescue. Nothing reveals the unwisdom of Lytton's haste than Kaufmann's unsympathetic reply to his appeal for assistance on the eve of the war. The Russian General advised the Amir to make peace with the British. The Russian Ambassador in London told the British Foreign Secretary later (in 1881) that 'Sher Ali was neither Russian nor English but an Afghan, desirous of preserving the independence of his country'.

After the fall of Kandahar and Jalalabad and the opening of the road to Kabul (December 1878) Sher Ali escaped to Russian Turkestan where he died soon afterwards (February 1879). His son Yaqub Khan concluded a treaty at Gandamak (May 1879). He was recognized as Amir. He agreed to cede the Pishin and Sibi districts, to receive a British Resident in Kabul and British Agents at Herat and elsewhere, and to conduct his foreign relations under British guidance. In return, the Government of India undertook to defend him against foreign aggression and to grant him an annual subsidy.

The exultant Viceroy did not see the weakness of the British position in Afghanistan. He assured the Secretary of State that 'the Afghan people certainly do not view us with any ill will'. The Resident in Kabul, Major Cavagnari, an ardent supporter of the 'Forward School', was 'a man of rash and restless disposition and overbearing temper'. Taking advantage of Yaqub Khan's weakness of character, he exercised effective control over internal matters such as appointments. The Afghan army, whose pay was many months in arrears, attacked the Residency and massacred Cavagnari and his staff (September 1879). It was a serious blow at the 'Forward School'. Even

Lord Lytton realized that 'the web of policy so carefully and patiently woven has been rudely shattered'.

The British army was set in motion once more. Kandahar and Kabul were occupied. Yaqub Khan formally abdicated. After these military successes the British army faced a general rising of the Afghans, chiefly instigated by the *mullahs* and sustained by religious enthusiasm. There were serious military operations; at the same time the Afghans were terrorized by 'indiscriminate hanging and burning of villages'. The transport and commissariat systems practically broke down. The financial estimates for the war were grossly exceeded.

The political gap created by the abdication of Yaqub Khan was to be filled, according to Lytton's plan, by the disintegration of Afghanistan. He believed that only 'a strong independent ruler' could maintain 'a strong, independent Afghanistan'. Such a ruler was more likely to seek 'alliance with the ambitious, energetic and not over-scrupulous Government of such a military empire as Russia', rather than 'an alliance with a power so essentially pacific and sensitively scrupulous as our own'. He secured the 'Home' Government's approval for the partition of Afghanistan into four political units: (1) Kabul, (2) Kandahar, (3) Herat, (4) the Pishin and Sibi districts ceded to the British by Yaqub Khan. Kabul and Kandahar were to be placed under two separate Afghan chiefs, and Herat was to be handed over to Persia. Pishin and Sibi were to be retained in British hands.

A candidate for the throne of Kabul appeared at this stage. This was Abdur Rahman Khan, Sher Ali's nephew, who had been living in Central Asia since 1868 under Russian protection. Early in 1880, with the permission of the Russian authorities, he entered Afghanistan and started negotiations with the British authorities.

Military operations in Afghanistan had not yet come to an end. Kabul was lost and re-occupied. Ghazni was occupied (April 1880). Kandahar was threatened by Ayub Khan, Yaqub Khan's brother, who held Herat. He inflicted a serious defeat on the British at Maiwand (July 1880).

Results of Second Anglo-Afghan War

Meanwhile the political scene had changed in England. In April 1880 the Conservatives were defeated in a General Election by the Liberals; Lord Beaconsfield resigned, and Gladstone became Prime Minister again. There were changes at

the Foreign Office and the India Office. A change in foreign policy was inevitable. Lytton was replaced in June 1880 by Lord Ripon (1880-84). The disaster at Maiwand was forgotten when General Roberts defeated Ayub Khan at Kandahar (August 1880). Armed opposition to the British in Afghanistan came to an end.

Ripon came with instructions to reverse entirely his predecessor's Afghan policy, to relinquish Pishin and Sibi, and to fall back upon the old frontier. He changed his views in the light of the changed situation and persuaded the 'Home' Government to modify its policy. Pishin and Sibi were retained by the British, but the idea of disintegrating Afghanistan was given up. Abdur Rahman Khan was recognized as the Amir of undivided Afghanistan (August 1880). He agreed to maintain no political relations with any foreign power other than the British, but the demand for posting a British Resident in Kabul was given up. He was assured of British protection against 'unprovoked aggression' by 'any foreign power'.

Unjustifiable alarm and injudicious haste were the primary causes of the Second Anglo-Afghan War, but it was not as fruitless as Lord Auckland's war from the political and military points of view. A definite check to Russian advance towards Afghanistan, the establishment of British control over the foreign relations of Afghanistan, the creation of the province of British Baluchistan (in which were incorporated Quetta, Pishin and Sibi), the occupation of Gilgit—these were solid and substantial gains. On the whole, Lytton's ill-advised policy 'provided India, for the first time since the collapse of the Mughal Empire, with a position from which north-western India could easily be defended'. But the effect of the war on Indian public opinion was unfavourable from the British point of view. The nationalist leaders saw that 'the imperial connection might involve them in some reckless and disastrous enterprise'. *England, Afghanistan and Russia (1880-1907)*

Ripon's settlement of the Afghan problem had two aspects: subordination of the Amir's external relations to British control (coupled with British non-interference in his internal affairs) and British obligation to defend the integrity and independence of his territory against foreign (i.e., Russian and Persian) aggression. The successful implementation of this dual policy depended primarily upon two factors: the character

and political acumen of the Amir, and the Russian policy in Central Asia.

Abdur Rahman Khan (1880-1901) was successful in consolidating his position in his disturbed country as also in maintaining his internal independence against the British from whom he received subsidies and on whom he depended for security against Russian advance towards his border. 'His autobiography shows that his only object was to preserve the integrity of his country and stability of his throne'. He complained that England had taken more Afghan territory than Russia; but he avoided open confrontation with the British although he secretly fomented opposition against them in the tribal areas.

His son Habibulla (1901-19) succeeded without any internecine war, but there were difficulties about the renewal of treaties. Habibulla claimed that these were between two countries and did not need renewal on the death of the Amir. Lord Curzon wished to treat the Amir as a subordinate ruler with whom it was necessary to conclude personal agreements. The dispute was settled by a treaty signed in 1905. It renewed all agreements between the Government of India and Abdur Rahman Khan. But the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, which affected Afghanistan's political and commercial interests, was concluded without Habibulla's knowledge and implemented without his consent. Henceforth he maintained an attitude of aloofness, but he remained neutral during the First Great War.

Despite Russia's formal recognition of the Oxus as the northern boundary of Afghanistan (1873) the southward pressure continued. Khokand was annexed in 1876, the Takke Turkomans were subjugated in 1881, and Merv was occupied in 1884. A treaty concluded in 1881 defined the boundaries between the Persian and Russian territories. Russia, 'taking advantage of the numerous external difficulties of the Gladstone Government, and fortified by a secret treaty with Germany', resumed its aggressive advance.

As Merv lay within 150 miles of the Afghan frontier, a sinister significance was attached in British political circles to its occupation by the Russians. 'The flame of diplomatic protest blazed fiercely forth in England'. An understanding was reached between Gladstone's Government and the Russian Government for formally defining the northern boundary of

Afghanistan through a joint Commission (1884). A British Indian official, Sir Peter Lumsden, was appointed to conduct the British mission. The discussions reached a deadlock; and the Russians occupied Panjdeh, a village situated a hundred miles due north of Merv, from the Afghans (March 1885). Thus arose the 'Panjdeh crisis'. Gladstone at first took up a belligerent attitude, for the British disaster in the Sudan—General Gordon's death at Khartum—'had cast odium upon his foreign policy' and British public opinion was unlikely to tolerate a 'new humiliation'. However, negotiations were opened, and these were continued, after the fall of the Gladstone Government (June 1885), by Lord Salisbury's Conservative Government. A part of the Afghan boundary from the Oxus westwards was formally laid down in 1886. By an agreement signed in 1895 both Afghanistan and Russia surrendered small slices of territory. No further room was left for disputes concerning the Afghan boundary. During the following years Russia's territorial ambitions were directed mainly to the Far East where its opponent was Japan. The question of Tibet created some amount of Anglo-Russian tension, but it had no direct impact on Afghan affairs.

Between 1890 and 1898 Anglo-Afghan relations were strained by Abdur Rahman Khan's involvement in tribal affairs in India's north-west border region. An exact delimitation of the Indo-Afghan frontier was considered necessary by the Government of India. This was done in 1893 by the Durand Agreement. The boundary laid down was afterwards known as the Durand Line; across it neither the Government of India nor the Amir was to interfere in any way. This arrangement did not prevent the possibility of an open war between them in connection with the great tribal outbreak of 1897. The Amir was uneasy because the Government of India appeared to be bent upon pursuing a forward policy on the north-west. Gilgit and Chitral had already been brought under British influence. The maintenance of peace was due largely to the Amir's patience and diplomatic skill.

Anglo-Russian Convention (1907)

The background of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 is explained by developments in international politics. England without any ally in Europe, and Russia, weakened by defeat in the Russo-Japanese War, gave up their traditional policy of hostility. One important factor was the growing

power of Germany in whom England, France and Germany found a common enemy. England abandoned isolationism; she made a treaty of alliance with Japan (1902), entered into an *entente* with France (1904), and extended her security line by forging an *entente* with Russia which was already in alliance with France. Thus England, France and Russia (the Triple *Entente*) stood against Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy (the Triple Alliance). Europe was divided into two armed camps. This was the prelude to the First Great War.

England and Russia had conflicting interests in Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet. These were settled by the convention of 1907. Persia was divided into two spheres of influence: Russian in the north and English in the south. Afghanistan and Tibet were recognized as falling wholly within England's sphere of interest. Russia engaged to conduct its foreign relations with Afghanistan through the British Government. British and Russian subjects were to enjoy equal commercial privileges in Afghanistan. There was no previous discussion with Amir Habibulla about this arrangement. The terms were communicated to him as a 'settled thing'. He refused formal assent and nourished a grievance, but the Convention remained unaffected because he offered no positive opposition.

Afghanistan after 1907

During the First Great War Habibulla declined to break with the English even though Pan-Islamic propaganda and Turko-German pressure were reinforced by the clamour of a section of his subjects. The Russian Revolution of 1917 dissolved the Anglo-Russian Convention. Afghanistan was no longer hemmed in by the Russians on the north, and the English were involved deeply in the crisis of the war. This strengthened the orthodox nationalist party in Afghanistan which resented Habibulla's attempt to modernize the country socially and economically and his dependence on the English. He was murdered in 1919. His successor, Amanulla, declared war against the English in order to win over the army and the orthodox nationalists.

The principal political objective of the Third Anglo-Afghan War (1919) was complete independence of Afghanistan. This was fulfilled by the treaty of 1921 by which Afghanistan resumed its freedom of managing its external affairs. The basic consideration in English policy now was to prevent Russian Bolshevik influence being established in Afghanistan.

'The situation as it stood in 1921 closely resembled that which existed before the Second Anglo-Afghan War. Bolshevik, like imperial, Russia aimed at striking Great Britain through India'. The weapons of the Communists of new Russia were different from those of Czarist Russia; the former used revolutionary propaganda instead of political intrigue and implied threat of war.

Amanulla provoked vehement opposition from the orthodox *mullahs* and the turbulent tribesmen. He was overthrown by a brigand named Baccha Saqqa, who became ruler of Kabul under the name of Habibulla. He alienated the English by establishing close relations with the Communist Government of Russia. He was soon overthrown by Nadir Khan who established a new royal dynasty in Kabul (1929). These political changes were probably engineered to some extent by the Government of India. Nadir Shah, as also his son and successor Zahir Shah, maintained friendly relations with the British.

Persia

As in Afghanistan, so also in Persia, the pressing problem for England was to check the growth of Russian influence. In the long contest for Herat between Afghanistan and Persia during the first half of the nineteenth century England supported the Afghan cause. The treaty of 1857, which ended Dost Muhammad Khan's fight for Herat (in which he had British aid), made the British arbiters in future disputes between Persia and Afghanistan. This is the background of the British arbitration on the boundary claims of Persia and Afghanistan in Seistan (1871). Another area in which the British settled a boundary dispute (1871) was Makran where Persia and Kalat put forward conflicting claims.

In the closing decades of the nineteenth century the political structure of Persia was crumbling and Russia was steadily increasing its influence in that country. For commercial purposes Russia needed a warm-water port on the southern coast of Persia, and towards this end the Russian Government steadily proceeded. But the East India Company had opened a factory at Bushire in 1763, and since the early years of the nineteenth century the British had been taking an increasing interest in the Persian Gulf and the territories adjacent to it. In 1853 the rulers of the petty States on the coast of the Persian Gulf concluded a treaty which made Britain the guardian of

inter-tribal peace in that region. This led, in effect, to the establishment of British suzerainty over the tribal chiefs.

In 1899 the British interests in Persia were described as 'commercial, political, strategical and telegraphic'. These were threatened by the growing Russian ascendancy in that country. In 1901 the problem took an acute shape: Russia had begun negotiations with Persia for commercial and railway concessions. The Government of India, with Lord Curzon as Viceroy, believed that 'the question of Persia and the Persian Gulf is on the verge of becoming the most critical issue of Central Asian politics'. Curzon's tour in the Persian Gulf region (1903) was a diplomatic step to exclude hostile interests. The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 made an adjustment of the conflicting interests; it recognized England's sole interest in southern Persia, Russia agreeing to confine its interest to northern Persia.

In the Arab hinterland of the Persian Gulf England's policy was to exclude Turkish, Russian and German influence. Aden was taken over in the thirties of the nineteenth century, for it had strategic importance in guarding the passage of ships through the Arabian and Red Seas. The opening of the Suez Canal greatly increased Aden's strategic importance. The British Resident at Aden controlled nine petty Arab principalities over which British protectorate had been established. Through the paramountcy over these principalities England virtually 'controlled the waters of the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea, up to the eastern coast of Africa, for the defence of India'.

Germany acquired from Turkey the right to build a railway from Berlin to Baghdad which would connect Berlin with the Persian Gulf. England was alarmed at the prospect of the entry of a great military power in this region of immense strategic importance from the point of view of India's security. After serious attempts to scuttle the German scheme England accepted a compromise which left to her control over the portion of the railway between Baghdad and the Persian Gulf.

2. TRIBES IN THE NORTH-WEST

Sind Frontier

The annexation of Sind (1843) pushed the British administrative boundary across the Indus and made it conterminous with the area inhabited by the Baluch tribes. Living in barren and almost waterless hills, they depended for subsistence upon plundering raids on the neighbouring districts. Robbing

the caravans, stealing the flock, plundering and murdering the people in the plains: such was their normal occupation.

Sir Charles Napier, who governed Sind after annexation, led expeditions against the tribes, built forts on the frontier, and posted detachments of troops at certain points to prevent or resist their raids. These measures proved ineffective. In 1848 Major (later General) John Jacob took charge of the Upper Sind Frontier. He introduced a new system. Instead of building forts he depended upon vigilant patrolling of the frontier. Later, on the basis of the treaty of Jacobabad with the Khan of Kalat (1876), the Baluchistan Agency was established in 1877. Major (later Sir Robert) Sandeman was appointed Agent to the Governor-General at Quetta. His policy was one of 'friendly and conciliatory intervention'. He made friends with the tribal chiefs and secured their co-operation by paying them allowances.

After the Second Anglo-Afghan War and the annexation of Pishin and Sibi the Agent-General was appointed Chief Commissioner for the British territories. These formed the province of British Baluchistan. Administration was improved, communications were opened out in different directions, and irrigation schemes as also forest development schemes were taken in hand. Apart from the British territories there were two States ruled by tribal chiefs—Kalat and Las Bela.

The Punjab Frontier

On the Punjab Frontier, which came under British control as a result of the annexation of the Sikh Kingdom in 1849, the tribal problem was different in some respects and much more formidable. Here the tribes were mostly Pathans, more fanatical than the Baluchis, and more amenable to the guidance of the *mullahs*. Democratic in spirit, they claimed equality for each man, and often resented the control of the *jirga* (council of headmen). The area inhabited by them was 'extremely mountainous' and the frontier was longer than it was in Sind. This made defence more difficult. Again, 'in Sind a strip of desert intervened between British territory and the haunt of the Baluch robbers, facilitating the employment of cavalry and the use of advanced posts. In the Punjab the cultivated plains were often easily accessible from the hills and valleys peopled by the tribes, and there was not enough open space for the movement of the cavalry. Finally, the Sikhs had left for the

British a 'heritage of anarchy'. The administrative boundaries were ill-defined, collection of revenue was possible only by means of annual incursions into the hills, and there was no check upon tribal feuds.

With a view to protecting the people in the plains from the plundering raids of the tribes, as also keeping the trade routes open, the British authorities generally resorted to reprisals. At the same time some conciliatory measures, e.g., abolition of capitation tax and frontier dues, were adopted. For many years no attempt was made to establish friendly contact with the tribal chiefs; officers were discouraged from crossing the border. At first the District Officers dealt with the tribal tracts. Political Agencies were established during the period between the Second Anglo-Afghan War and the year 1896. A chain of forts was erected along the borders. A special force, known as the Punjab Frontier Force, was raised; it was amalgamated with the Regular Army in 1886.

Three punitive methods were adopted against the tribes. Fines were intended to provide compensation for plundered property and 'blood-money' for lives lost. Blockade succeeded only when the geography of the tribal area concerned made it possible for the British authorities to cut off its trade, supplies and assistance from outside. Punitive expeditions were condemned by Lytton in 1877 as 'a system of semi-barbarous reprisals'.

The British policy in the frontier was generally defensive during the period 1849-76, for control was in the hands of administrators of the 'Non-intervention School' of which Lawrence was the principal spokesman. The 'Forward School' gained ascendancy under Lytton, and the necessity for a scientific frontier provoked a controversy. The Second Anglo-Afghan War did not solve the problem. The Durand Line (1893) demarcated the respective spheres of influence of the Amir of Kabul and the Government of India over the frontier tribes, but it had 'no strategic value at all'.

This Anglo-Afghan Boundary Agreement did not settle the local problem of tribal control. Economic necessity forced the tribes to regularly plunder the rich plains below their hills. Another factor responsible for unrest was political propaganda with intrigues, 'either instigated directly from Kabul with the full cognizance of the Amir, or carried on by his local officials'. The *mullahs* also incited the tribes to rebel against the infidel

Feringhis. The extension of British control over tribal areas, in pursuance of the 'Forward Policy', supplied material ground for discontent.

'Throughout the nineties of the last century, especially from 1895 onwards, the frontier districts were abnormally disturbed'. Amir Abdur Rahman was seriously alarmed by the gradual projection of British administrative control into the tribal areas and the establishment of a permanent British garrison at Chitral. The tribes were alarmed too. A spirit of fanaticism was in the air. The *mullahs* were active. Possibly some agents of the Sultan of Turkey, Abdul Hamid II who was a champion of Pan-Islamism, preached a holy war against the Christian infidels.

Lord Elgin II (1894-99) had to face serious tribal risings in 1897-98 practically along the whole border; but the movement did not spread to Baluchistan and Kurram. British detachments working independently in different zones restored peace.

Lord Curzon's north-west frontier policy

Before assuming the Viceroyalty of India Lord Curzon had travelled from the Pamirs to Chitral and thence to Kabul, Ghazni, Kandahar and Quetta. Unlike his predecessors with the sole exception of Lawrence, he had personal knowledge of the frontier. He gave up the 'Forward Policy', i.e., steady penetration into the tribal region, which was largely responsible for tribal unrest during the nineties. He defined the 'main features' of his north-west frontier policy as follows: 'withdrawal of British forces from advanced positions, employment of tribal forces in defence of tribal country, concentration of British forces in British territory behind them as a safeguard and a support, improvement of communications in the rear'. This new system was put in operation along the whole frontier from Chitral to Baluchistan, but regular troops were maintained at Chitral.

Curzon tried to conciliate the tribes by meeting their chiefs and assuring them that the British Government had no wish to seize their territory or to interfere with their internal affairs. Allowances were paid to the chiefs for keeping the roads and passes open and for the maintenance of peace. Employment was offered to the tribesmen in the local levies and the militia. The extension of railways within British territory was intended

mainly to ensure the quick movement of troops in times of trouble, but this helped the Pathans economically by promoting trade.

All frontier questions were dealt with initially by the Punjab Government, and it was through that Government that important issues reached the Government of India. This system was described by Curzon as 'irrational in theory and bizarre in practice', for it prevented swiftness of decision and rapidity of action. In 1901 he created a new province—the North-West Frontier Province—with a Chief Commissioner at its head. It comprised five settled districts of the Punjab as also the trans-border tracts between the administrative boundary and the Durand Line. The Chief Commissioner functioned under the direct control of the Government of India.

3. BHUTAN AND TIBET

Bhutan

By a treaty concluded in 1774 Warren Hastings cut off political relations between Bhutan, an independent State, and Cooch Behar, a small principality in North Bengal which came under British protection. He sent several missions—under Bogle, Hamilton and Turner—which helped in opening trade with Bhutan and—through Bhutan—with Tibet. In the early years of the nineteenth century some disputes occurred regarding the boundaries between the British and Bhutanese territories. This problem became more serious after the annexation of Assam by the British (1826) at the close of the First Anglo-Burmese War. At the base of the lower ranges of the Bhutan hills lay a narrow strip of territory, about twenty miles wide, extending from the Dhansiri river in Assam in the east to the Tista river in North Bengal in the west. It covered an area of 1,000 square miles which was intersected by 18 *duars* (doors, passes)—7 on the frontier of Assam and 11 on the frontier of Bengal. These *duars* contained fine cotton and timber lands.

Agreements on the Assam *duars*, were made by the British and Bhutan Governments in confirmation of arrangements which had been in force during the rule of the Ahom Kings; but these did not produce satisfactory results. A mission under Captain Pemberton was sent to Bhutan in 1837; it collected valuable information on the frontier, but failed to make any

amicable adjustment of disputes. Lord Auckland annexed the Assam *duars* (1841) on payment of an annual compensation to Bhutan.

In the Bengal *duars* the problem was more serious. The Bhutanese raided the frontier areas, plundered and destroyed property, and killed men or carried them into captivity. As attempts to prevent such outrages failed, the Government of India sent a Mission to Bhutan under Sir Ashley Eden in 1863. He was insulted in open *darbar* and compelled, as the only means of ensuring the safe return of the Mission, to sign under protest a document for the 'renunciation' of the Assam *duars*. Then he managed to escape to Bengal (1864).

The result was war (1864-65). At this time Lawrence, the staunch advocate of 'Non-intervention', was the Viceroy. The Bhutanese won two military successes: the recapture of Dewangiri and the occupation of Tazigong. By a treaty (November 1865) all *duars* in Assam and Bengal were formally ceded to the Government of India; provision was made for the surrender of all British subjects detained forcibly in Bhutan, for the mutual extradition of criminals, and for the maintenance of free trade. In return, the Government of India engaged to pay to the Bhutan Government an annual sum, but payment was liable to be stopped in the event of renewal of raids in the British territories. Bhutan enjoyed formal but nominal independence because its geographical position kept it free from the influence of any foreign power except the British.

Tibet: early relations

Tibet was strategically very important to the Government of India, for it 'formed the best possible barrier to India on the north'. Friendly relations with Tibet were essential to ensure a scientific frontier on the north. Moreover, economic exploitation of Tibet was likely to be profitable. The wool of Tibet was in great demand in India; and in the late nineteenth century Tibet was regarded as a good market for Indian tea. The country was potentially rich in mineral resources, but no effort had been made to exploit them.

There were two difficulties in the way of establishing close relations with Tibet. First, China had established her suzerainty over Tibet, and towards the end of the eighteenth century Chinese control over the country was considerable. This suzerainty became nominal in the nineteenth century, but it was never formally repudiated or withdrawn. The Tibetans used

Chinese protectorate as a convenient screen to ward off any interference from, and contact with, the foreign powers. Secondly, Tibet, known as the 'Hermit Kingdom', was a secluded country, and 'the approach of strangers was utterly prohibited'.

Warren Hastings tried to improve trade relations with Tibet, but the missions of George Bogle (1774) and Samuel Turner failed to secure trade concessions. 'The door which he succeeded in opening a little was closed more firmly than ever' as a result of war between Tibet and Nepal (1792) when the Tibetans and the Chinese thought that the British had encouraged the Gurkhas in their aggressive designs. In 1855 the Gurkhas again invaded Tibet and secured important political and commercial concessions.

In 1885 Colman Macaulay, a high official of the Government of Bengal, secured Chinese assent to lead a mission to Lhasa; but the Tibetans were strongly opposed to close intercourse with India, and the proposal fell through. In 1886 they sent a force into Sikkim which had treaty relations with the Government of India. Moreover, the trade route between India and Tibet lay through Sikkim. The Government of India sent a force into Sikkim and drove the Tibetans away. No treaty was concluded with Tibet; but a Convention was concluded with China—Tibet's nominal suzerain—in 1890. It recognized British Protectorate over Sikkim and fixed the water-parting of the Tista as the boundary between Tibet and Sikkim. But the Tibetans did not recognize this arrangement; and when the boundary pillars were erected, they were mutilated or destroyed. However, a trade treaty was concluded between China and England in 1893, by which a trade mart was established at Yatung, eight miles on the Tibetan side of the frontier. The Tibetans obstructed the development of Yatung as a trade mart by building a wall to prevent British traders and travellers from going any further into their territory.

These developments exposed the unreality of the Chinese suzerainty over Tibet as also the determination of the Tibetans to keep the British at arm's length. But trade relations, existing from the ancient times, could not be cut off. There was a powerful urge on the British side for expansion of trade in Tibet. The British planters, who had developed tea cultivation in Assam, were keen to exploit Chinese and Tibetan markets. Moreover, the entry of Sikkim and Bhutan into the

circle of British political influence led to border disputes between these countries and Tibet.

Tibet : Lord Curzon's policy

In the nineties of the last century problems of trade and frontier got intermixed, but no definite policy was evolved till the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon (1899-1905). He had travelled widely in Asia and was well-informed about international affairs relating to this continent. He held strong imperialist views. He wanted full British control over all States situated on India's borders and the total exclusion of the influence of any other power. Naturally he took serious notice of the possibility of Russian penetration into Tibet which would be a danger to India's security. Tibet lay in the way of Russia's southward expansion. The Russians had established their hold over Pamir in the north. They were advancing to the Far East at the cost of the disintegrating Chinese Empire. Rumours were rife of China entering into an agreement with Russia about Tibet.

In such a complicated situation the news of some sort of contact between Lhasa and St. Petersburg created suspicions in British political circles. In 1899 Curzon, anxious to establish direct communication with Tibet, sent a letter to the Dalai Lama; but it was returned unopened. One Dorjief, a Mongolian Buriat by birth and a Russian subject, a former tutor to the Dalai Lama, was reported to have assisted him in seizing power from the Council of Regency. In 1898, 1900 and 1901 Dorjief visited Russia to collect money from the Buddhists of that country. But he was received in audience by the Czar, and this led to speculations in British circles—in England as also in India—that his mission was really political. The Russian Foreign Minister categorically denied that the Buddhist monk had any political object. Although it was physically impossible for Russia to invade Tibet, the establishment of Russian diplomatic influence at Lhasa could not be ruled out.

Curzon regarded it as 'really the most grotesque and indefensible thing that at a distance of little more than 200 miles from our frontier, the community of unarmed monks should set us perpetually at defiance'. Initially his primary object was to secure Tibetan concurrence to the agreements of 1890 and 1893 and to persuade them to meet British wishes regarding trade. He wanted a better trade mart than Yatung; Phari, inside Tibet, was considered to be more suitable for commercial purposes. The Dorjief episode stressed the

political aspect of the Tibetan problem. The prospect of Russian hegemony over Tibet was alarming. It was useless to expect helpful intervention from China, for, as the Viceroy wrote, 'the Emperor's suzerainty over Tibet had almost ceased to exist'. He decided, with the approval of the 'Home' Government, to deal directly with Lhasa.

A mission under Colonel Younghusband, with a small escort of 200 men, was sent into Tibetan territory, but a larger force was kept ready within Sikkim to be available in case of necessity. The mission waited at Khambajong for about six months (July-December 1903) in the hope of meeting the Tibetan representatives, but none came. The mission was then directed by the Government of India to proceed further, occupy the Chumbi valley, and advance as far as Gyantse. The Tibetans insisted on Younghusband's return to Yatung before beginning conversations, and as this condition remained unfulfilled, they offered military resistance and suffered a serious reverse (March 1904). Younghusband was reinforced by fresh troops; a diplomatic mission became a military expedition. He advanced into the interior of Tibet and occupied Gyantse (April 1904). The Tibetans continued fruitless resistance. Younghusband continued his advance and occupied Lhasa (August 1904). The Dalai Lama fled to Mongolia. In his absence the Tibetan authorities at Lhasa were forced to sign a treaty (September 1904). Its main provisions were as follows: (1) Two new trade marts (apart from Yatung) were to be opened—at Gyantse and Gartok. (2) No restrictions would be placed on trade and no duties would be levied other than those provided in the tariff. (3) To meet the cost of war an indemnity of 75 lakhs would be paid in 75 annual instalments. (4) The Chumbi valley was to remain in British occupation until the payment was completed. (5) No foreign power would be allowed to interfere in Tibetan affairs, or to send Agents to Tibet, or to acquire political or economic interests in Tibet (such as lease of territory, concessions for roads or mines, etc.).

In the early years of the nineteenth century the improvement of British relations with Russia was under consideration. When the Tibetan adventure was undertaken the Russian Government informed the British Government in London that the establishment of British supremacy at Lhasa would alter the position in Central Asia. Recognizing the force of this objection, the British Government assured the Russian Govern-

ment (June 1904) that 'so long as no power endeavours to intervene in the affairs of Tibet, they (i.e., the British) would not attempt either to annex it, to establish a protectorate over it, or in any way to control its internal administration'. This pledge was respected in a literal sense, but the Younghusband expedition brought Tibet 'within the sphere of British influence exclusively'.

From the very beginning there was a difference of outlook between the Government of India and the 'Home' Government; the latter tried at different stages to curb Curzon's zeal. But the Viceroy was successful in pushing the 'Home' Government into a position of supporting his aggressive measures, and the dictation of terms to the Tibetans at Lhasa was a victory for him. However, the 'Home' Government's veto took away much of the glamour of this victory. In response to a furore in Parliament and the press, and out of respect for Russian susceptibilities, the 'Home' Government modified the treaty in two important particulars. The indemnity was reduced to 25 lakhs. The period of occupation of the Chumbi valley was reduced to 25 years. Curzon's proposal for stationing an Agent at Lhasa was rejected.

Simla Agreement (1914)

A Convention concluded with China in 1906 ratified the treaty of Lhasa (1904). Although there was no specific mention of Chinese suzerainty, it was stated that China would take steps for the fulfilment of the terms by the Tibetans and would not permit any other foreign State to interfere in Tibetan affairs. Thus China was given an opportunity to recover her lost position in Tibet.

China's recognition of England's special position in Tibet was strengthened by the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907. Russia recognized the special interests of England and the suzerain rights of China in Tibet, engaged to abstain from all interference in the internal affairs of Tibet, and undertook to enter into negotiations with Tibet only through the Chinese Government.

Taking advantage of the British and Russian recognition of China's suzerainty over Tibet, the Chinese Government took steps to convert suzerainty into sovereignty. Tibet was practically turned into a district governed by Chinese officials. Armed resistance developed in some parts of Tibet, and Chinese troops poured into the country. The Dalai Lama fled to India

(1910) and sought British aid. The Chinese Revolution of 1911, the fall of the Manchu dynasty and the establishment of a Republic under Yuan Shi Kai created many complications. The last of the Chinese troops marched out of Lhasa, and the Dalai Lama returned to his country, in 1913.

The political changes in China and in Tibet necessitated a new political arrangement. A Tripartite Conference was held at Simla. It was attended by representatives of China, Tibet and British India. Sir Arthur Henry MacMahon, Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, was the Chairman. He became 'in effect the arbiter between China and Tibet and ultimately dictated the terms in the absence of agreement between these two parties'.

An Agreement based on MacMahon's plan was signed at Simla on 23 July 1914. Chinese suzerainty was recognized over the whole of Tibet; but the country was to be divided into two zones—Inner Tibet and Outer Tibet. Outer Tibet was to be autonomous, i.e., free from China's military and administrative control. In Inner Tibet the Chinese could have their administration, but the Dalai Lama was to have full control in matters affecting religious institutions. Tibet would not be converted into a province of China nor be represented in the Chinese National Assembly. So far as India was concerned, the British engaged not to annex Tibetan territory, or establish colonies or station troops or officers therein. But special British interest in the maintenance of a stable and effective Government in Tibet, as also in the maintenance of peace and order in the neighbourhood of Indian frontiers, was recognized. The British right to maintain a Trade Agent at Gyantse, and have access to Lhasa, was also recognized. British commerce would be entitled to preferential treatment. There was an additional Agreement relating to the boundary between Tibet and India's north-eastern region. This boundary came to be known as the Mac-Mahon Line.

4. UPPER BURMA

King Mindon (1853-78)

The Second Anglo-Burmese War (1852) had two immediate results: the annexation of the Burmese province of Pegu to the Company's territories, and the deposition of King Pagan by his brother Mindon. Two Burmese provinces—Arakan and

Tenasserim,—had been annexed by the Company after the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824-26). The three provinces were united and formed into a single province, called British Burma, under a Chief Commissioner in 1862, with headquarters at Rangoon. After 1852 the independent King of Burma ruled from Mandalay over a truncated and land-locked Kingdom. Bounded by British territories (Assam and Arakan on the west, British Burma on the south) and China (on the north-east), it had no access to the sea.

Mindon was a better and wiser King than his immediate predecessors. 'He was erudite according to native standards', his piety was 'ostentatious', and his administration—judged in the Burmese context—was humane. He introduced some 'obscurantist' economic measures for the benefit of his country. In political relations with his overpowerful British neighbour he acted shrewdly and realistically, and despite many difficulties he succeeded in maintaining his independence.

The Burmese Kings considered it humiliating to cede any part of their territories. After the Second Anglo-Burmese War Lord Dalhousie failed to get a treaty, and he annexed Pegu by Proclamation. Mindon declined to recognize this annexation and tried in different ways to secure the restoration of the lost province. Failure embittered him, but knowing that hostility was futile, he respected the new frontier. Apart from acquiescing in the cession of Pegu, he was practically forced by the British to recognize the independence of Karenni.

Mindon, like his predecessors, declined to consider the Viceroy of India as an equal in the field of diplomatic intercourse. He tried unsuccessfully to secure the right of direct negotiations with the Queen of England. He was mortified, but as a practical statesman he maintained friendly relations with the British Agents and Residents at his capital from 1862. However, during the last two years of his life he refrained from official intercourse with the Political Agents but took no positive step to create an open breach.

The despatch of political Missions to European countries was an important feature of Mindon's foreign policy. He sent an Embassy to France and concluded a treaty which proved abortive. He received an Italian envoy at Mandalay and concluded a treaty. He also received a Chinese Agent. A Burmese envoy visited Persia, but the Czar of Russia declined to receive a Burmese Mission. Mindon's object was to import arms from

foreign countries as also to promote Burmese commerce. He failed to achieve practical results owing primarily to British pressure on the European Governments.

The Government of India concluded two commercial treaties with Mindon (1862, 1867) which opened Upper Burma to British trade. The treaties were highly favourable to British interest. Attempts were made by the British merchants to open land routes through Upper Burma for trade with the Chinese province of Yunan.

Annexation of Upper Burma

Mindon was succeeded (1878) by one of his numerous sons, Thibaw. He was only twenty years old; he had no administrative experience or political training. Early in 1879 a number of the 'late King's sons, with mothers, wives and children', were murdered with extraordinary cruelty. From the Burmese point of view this was merely an exercise of the King's traditional right 'to take such measures to prevent disturbances in his country as might be desirable'. Referring to the old practice known as the 'Massacre of the Kinsmen' a British historian says that the incident in 1879 'probably differed from its forerunners neither in extent nor horror but only in taking place in the full light of modern publicity'. Under instructions from Lord Lytton the Resident delivered 'forcible remonstrance against these barbarities'. Soon afterwards the Residency was withdrawn from Mandalay; it no longer served any useful purpose because it was completely cut off from contact with the Court and the officials.

The Government of India advocated the cancellation of all existing treaties with Burma on the plea of lack of redress for British subjects' grievances in Burmese territory. But the 'Home' Government was not prepared for any such radical change of policy.

Thibaw's Government offended the British commercial interests by continuing to exercise the King's right of monopoly in respect of certain important articles of trade. Certain new monopolies created in 1881 were regarded by the Chief Commissioner as constituting an infringement of the commercial treaty of 1867. After strong remonstrance from the Government of India all monopolies were abolished (1882). Negotiations for revision of the existing treaties followed, but no agreement could be reached.

Thibaw continued his father's policy of seeking treaties

with the European powers. A Mission was sent to Paris in 1883, and a Franco-Burmese treaty was concluded in 1885. It provided for commercial intercourse only; there were no political or military stipulations. Another treaty was concluded with Germany; it secured for Germany the 'most-favoured-nation' clause, but contained nothing which could prejudice British political interests. The Burmese envoys went to Italy as well, but no treaty was made.

As an independent country Burma had full right to establish diplomatic contact and conclude treaties with other powers. The British had no political or legal right to control Burma's external relations. But they claimed 'a special interest in all that concerned' Burma 'in consequence of its vicinity to British India, and of its political relations with this Empire'. On this plea the 'Home' Government informed France of its 'serious objections . . . to any special alliance or political understanding between Burma and any other power'.

Burma's relations with France alarmed the British for commercial as also political reasons. France had won an empire in Indo-China, and the British suspected that it was now trying 'to dominate Upper Burma by peaceful penetration'. There were disturbing reports that Thibaw had granted the concession of certain ruby mines in Upper Burma to a French Company, that he was prepared to reduce the import duty on French goods to 50 per cent of what British goods paid, that the French were constructing a railway in Upper Burma and establishing a bank at Mandalay. The Viceroy, Lord Dufferin (1884-88), wrote to the Secretary of State that 'the establishment by France of dominant or exclusive influence in Upper Burma would involve such serious consequences to our own Burmese possessions and to India, that it should be prevented even at the risk of hostilities with Mandalay'. He practically endorsed the demand for annexation of Upper Burma put forward by the Rangoon, London and Glasgow Chambers of Commerce, i.e., the British merchants interested in trade with Burma.

What precipitated war and annexation was a dispute between Thibaw's Government and a British firm—the Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation—over the royalty payable for extracting timber from forests in Upper Burma. A fine was imposed on the Company for having 'fraudulently exported, without payment of royalty, timber which should have paid royalty'. The Government of India took up the Company's

cause and demanded, not only the withdrawal of the order of fine, but also the submission of the Burmese King's external relations to British control. In reply, Thibaw's Government defended the penalty imposed on the Company and proposed that the demand regarding control over external relations should be referred to 'the joint decision of France, Germany and Italy who are friends of both Governments'.

Anticipating the rejection of this reply by the Government of India, Thibaw issued a proclamation asking his subjects to fight for the cause of religion and national honour. Dufferin sent an expeditionary force (November 1885) which proceeded up the Irrawaddy 'almost unopposed', accepted Thibaw's surrender, and occupied Mandalay within two weeks. A proclamation of annexation was issued on 1 December 1885. The Secretary of State declared : 'The arrogance and barbarity of a native Court, the oppression of British subjects, the hindrance to British commerce, the intrigues of foreign nations are for ever terminated in British Burma'. The prime causes of Thibaw's fall were 'the hindrance to British commerce' and his alleged susceptibility to French 'intrigues'.

5. FIRST GREAT WAR

India's contribution

Although the outbreak of war in Europe had no immediate connection with the defence of India, yet as a part of the British Empire India immediately became involved in it, and she made splendid contributions to the victory of the Allied Powers. During the War 1,161,789 Indians were recruited; 1,215,338 men had been sent overseas from India, of whom 101,430 became casualties. Indian troops fought in France, Turkey, Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Persian Gulf, Aden and East Africa. The Government of India contributed between twenty and thirty millions yearly, and, in addition, made a 'free gift' of one hundred million to the British Government. Lord Hardinge (Viceroy, 1910-16) stated that India had been 'bled white'. Lord Birkenhead declared : 'Without India the war would have been immensely prolonged, if indeed without her help it could have been brought to a victorious conclusion'.

Although some Indian revolutionaries were active in India as also in some foreign countries, the British Government knew that Indian nationalists would not exploit England's crisis to

further their political programme by extreme measures. So certain England was of India's loyalty that India was 'denuded of troops to such an extent that the British garrison for the space of some weeks stood at a figure of 15,000 men'. There was some trouble in the tribal area in the north-west; but the Amir of Afghanistan, Habibulla, refused to break his alliance with the British Government despite German and Turkish intrigues in his country.

Muddle in Mesopotamia

The only campaign during the four-year war conducted by, or under the direct supervision of, the Government of India was that in Mesopotamia; in all other theatres Indian troops fought under the control of the 'Home' Government. In 1914-16, during the Viceroyalty of Hardinge, the Mesopotamian campaign was hopelessly mismanaged. Towards the middle of 1916 the 'Home' Government took charge of the campaign. A Commission was appointed 'to make an investigation into the muddle and its causes'. The Commission's Report (1917), stated Prime Minister Lloyd George, 'cast a baleful light upon the mismanagement, stupidity, criminal neglect, and amazing incompetence of the military authorities . . .'. The Secretary of State for India, Sir Austen Chamberlain, resigned.

The muddle was due largely to the illogical division of responsibilities between two Members of the Governor-General's Executive Council : the Commander-in-Chief and the Military Member. This division had led to a bitter controversy between Lord Curzon and the then Commander-in-Chief, Lord Kitchener. As the Secretary of State supported Lord Kitchener, Lord Curzon had resigned.

Growing national interest in external affairs

Before the First Great War even enlightened public opinion in India took very little interest in external affairs. There were nationalist protests against the Second Anglo-Afghan War and the annexation of Upper Burma primarily because such military adventures increased the Indian tax-payers' burden. Generally speaking, domestic issues absorbed the attention of the politically conscious classes. The victory of Japan in the Russo-Japanese War was a significant exception. It was interpreted in nationalist circles as a victory of the East over the West and as an incentive to Asian nations in their efforts to shake off Western domination.

During and after the First Great War educated Indians began to take a lively interest in world affairs, particularly in those political developments in Europe, Asia and Africa (Egypt) which were connected with Indian political aspirations and sentiments. Indian Muslims took a great deal of interest in the fortunes of the countries of the Middle East where tremendous changes occurred as a result of the War. The disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, the abolition of the Caliphate, the rise of a progressive nationalist State in Turkey under the rule of Kamal Pasha, the anti-British movement in Egypt, the establishment of a Jewish 'National Home' in Palestine, the progress of political reforms in Persia—these developments affected both communal and nationalist sentiments in this country. For a brief period these mutually contradictory sentiments found a common point of interest in the Khilafat Movement. The formalization of the concept of 'Dominion Status' within the British Empire, defined by the Balfour formula of 1926 and placed on a legal footing by the Statute of Westminster (1931), influenced the political ideal of the Congress. When China became a victim of Japanese aggression from 1931 onwards, Indian sympathy was definitely on the side of the Chinese. Japan's defiance of the League of Nations on the Manchurian issue and Italy's aggression upon Abyssinia evoked strong protests in India. The Russian Revolution of 1917 impressed many Indians, including Rabindranath Tagore, and Communist influence began to penetrate into India. The rise of Fascism in Italy under Mussolini and in Germany under Hitler provoked resentment and alarm in India. The progress of the Spanish Civil War was watched with interest. Among the top-ranking national leaders Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose were close observers of all important developments in international politics.

Between the two Great Wars India was unconsciously preparing herself for the rôle which she was to play in world affairs after her liberation from the British yoke.

India in the comity of nations

Before the First Great War India had no existence in the eye of International Law; she was no more than a dependency of England. She had no control over her domestic or external affairs; she was not even a part-sovereign State. It was in connection with the First Great War that India for the first time received some recognition of her separate existence as a unit

of the British Empire. Indian members nominated by the British Government took part in the War Conferences of 1917 and 1918, and on the basis of a resolution adopted at the War Conference of 1918 India was represented (through British nominees) in later Imperial Conferences. An Indian (Sir S. P. Sinha) received a British peerage and became a Minister of the Crown in England. In the naval treaty which followed the Naval Conference of 1930 India was definitely recognized as a separate unit of the British Empire. India was represented (through British nominees) at the Imperial Economic Conference at Ottawa (in Canada) in 1932. During the Second World War Indian representatives (nominated by the British Government) attended the War Cabinet in London along with the representatives of the British Dominions like Canada.

India's growing status within the British Empire naturally won for her some recognition in the international sphere. Her representatives (nominated by the British Government) signed the Treaty of Versailles and the Covenant of the League of Nations. Her delegates (who were British nominees) played a constructive role in the deliberations of the Assembly of the League of Nations and also of the International Labour Organisation. She was represented (through British nominees) at the London Naval Conference (1930) and at the Disarmament Conference at Geneva (1932-33). During the Second World War the Government of India had an Agent-General in Washington. In 1945 India—still a dependency of Britain—became an Original Member of the United Nations at its birth.

ECONOMY (1858-1914)

1. INDUSTRY

Decline of indigenous industries

The nationalist view on the economic aspect of British rule in India was thus expressed by the great Congress leader Surendra Nath Banerjee: 'It had been the settled policy of England in India, ever since her rise in political power, to convert India into a land of raw produce for the benefit of the manufacturers and operatives of England'. A modern British historian says: 'The old industry was ruined in Bengal and the Carnatic partly by the high-handed methods of the Company after Plassey and the French wars, partly by the collapse of the export trade to Europe, and partly by the lack of any protection against the machine goods of Lancashire'. The progressive decline of the town handicrafts and village artisan industries destroyed India's traditional 'union between agriculture and manufacturing industry'. By the end of the nineteenth century this process had practically reached its climax, but modern industry had not yet reached considerable proportions.

National demand for industrialization

During the second half of the nineteenth century India's nationalist leaders advocated rapid industrialization, but they were fully aware of the difficulties. The country could not provide capital for large-scale industries. Ranade said: 'Just as the land in India thirsts for water, so the industry of the country is parched up for want of capital'. Another major difficulty was the country's serious backwardness in technical education. It could be removed by the establishment of technical schools, colleges and institutes, but the Government took little interest in this matter. It was also recognized that the spirit of initiative and enterprise had not been sufficiently developed among the people. There was no scarcity of land or labour, but the British rulers thought—as Lord Curzon said—that the 'vast majority' of the Indian people had been 'trained to agriculture, were only physically fitted for agriculture and will never practise anything but agriculture'.

British policy

From the third decade of the nineteenth century a process

of economic transformation began in India. The Government gradually adopted the policy of developing the country, especially in the field of trade and transport, which involved slow progress towards modernization. During the second half of the century the development work undertaken by the Government centred round the construction of railways, roads and bridges, ports and docks, telegraphs, irrigation works, etc. In 1882 Sir George Campbell, a distinguished civil servant, wrote : '..... in respect of public works and material improvement India has been well kept up to the level of civilized countries'. This policy was dictated by the commercial and strategic needs of the British rulers, not by the needs of the Indian people. 'The determining influences were the British private merchants' interests and the needs of the stability and perpetuation of the Empire'. Such a policy could not transform India into a 'really progressive industrialized country of the European type'. Its direct result was the conversion of India into 'a raw material producing and processing as well as capital absorbing country'. A special type of colonial economy emerged, and one of its striking features was restricted industrialization under the patronage of the State.

Railways

Of the development projects largely assisted by the State, the biggest was the construction of railways.

Lord Dalhousie took great interest in railway projects for military and economic reasons. The railways would, he thought, 'immensely increase the striking power' of the British military forces, 'bring British capital and enterprise into India', and 'bring into the ports produce from the interior'. He laid special stress on cotton for which England was 'calling aloud' for use in her textile industry, and which could easily be conveyed to the ports if these were connected by railways with 'distant plains'. Sir Charles Wood, President of the Board of Control, was anxious to 'draw a large supply of cotton from India' so that England did not remain 'entirely dependent on the United States' for this essential raw material of the British textile industry.

Under Dalhousie's plan railway construction was to be undertaken by British private enterprise 'under the supervision and control' of the Government. Some joint-stock companies incorporated in England came forward. The Government of India provided them with free grants of land and guaranteed

interest at rates varying between $4\frac{1}{2}$ and 5 per cent on the capital outlay. Any profits over the guaranteed rate of interest were to be shared with the Government, and it reserved the right to purchase the lines after 25 or 50 years. The management remained with the Companies which had their Boards of Directors in England. The Government exercised control over the railways through the medium of a Consulting Engineer. Curzon established the Railway Board under the Government of India.

The 'guarantee system' led to much 'reckless expenditure' on the part of the Companies and imposed an enormous financial burden on the Government. Gradually two changes were made. First, the construction of some railways was undertaken directly by the Government. Secondly, a 'new guarantee system' was introduced; the railways were declared to be the property of the State, and the rate of interest on the capital invested by the Companies was usually $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. In 1906-7 the total mileage of railway lines open for traffic was about 29,500, including 22,100 miles owned by the State. The total capital outlay down to 1901 was £226,773,200.

Railway building served for Britain 'the double function of providing a profitable outlet for capital and stimulating the export of British capital goods'. The railway Companies exported considerable British capital to India and purchased railway equipment in Britain, thereby stimulating industrial production in that country.

For India the construction of railways heralded a new industrial age: without railways modern industries could not have grown. Moreover, the railways created new facilities for communication between different parts of the country, promoted internal and external trade, and developed a sense of unity among the people. The conditions of railway travel led to slow relaxation of caste prejudices.

Principal industries

The plantation industries of indigo, tea and coffee were exclusively European in ownership and did not entirely depend on modern mechanical contrivances. Indigo lost its importance in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Coffee was a regional small industry. The tea industry in Assam, organized by the Assam Company which was formed in London in 1839, entered a period of prosperity in the seventies. The

number of tea gardens increased from 51 in 1859 to 302 in 1902; these were controlled by British managing agency firms. The Indian Tea Association, formed in 1881, a representative body of European planters, used to nominate one representative to the Bengal Legislative Council. For easy transport of tea from the Assam gardens to the port of Chittagong the Assam Bengal Railway, formed in 1892, secured a financial guarantee. Meanwhile Bengali Hindus had been attracted by the prosperity of the tea industry, and the Jalpaiguri Tea Company had been founded by them in 1878. There was considerable investment of Indian capital in the tea gardens in North Bengal during the first quarter of the twentieth century.

Of the industries financed by Indian capital the cotton textile industry was the biggest. Neither foreign competition nor the cotton excise duties imposed by the Government of India in the interest of the British textile industry could check its progress. In 1914 India ranked as the fourth greatest cotton-manufacturing country in the world.

The first cotton mills in India were promoted by Europeans as early as 1818 and 1830. In the fifties Indian capital began to dominate the industry and the Bombay-Ahmadabad region became its principal centre. Machinery had to be imported from England. For many years mill managers and heads of departments were Lancashire men. The number of cotton mills in the Bombay Presidency rose from 13 in 1865 to 167 in 1898-99. In the early years of the present century Bengali capital flowed into the industry under the impetus of the Swadeshi Movement. The Great War of 1914-18 brought to the industry 'unparalleled prosperity'. It became extremely difficult to obtain imports from Lancashire. The Indian cotton mills not only responded to the requirements of the private buyers but also received large Government orders.

The jute industry, originally a handicraft of Bengal with a small export market, was developed by European enterprise. Its value was realized as early as 1838 when export started to Dundee in Scotland. The first jute mill was founded at Rishra (near Calcutta) in 1855. The industry developed almost entirely in and around Calcutta where it enjoyed the advantage of proximity to the area of raw material supply.

The chief demand for jute arose from the requirements of packing and storing of agricultural produce. The possibility of large-scale jute manufacture was opened up by two

developments. First, the Crimean War cut off the supply of Russian raw flax and hemp, and the Dundee market became dependent upon Indian substitutes. Secondly, the construction of railways connecting Calcutta with the coal belt around Raniganj assured regular supply of coal for the jute mills. Moreover, there was rapid extension of jute cultivation which was taken up by the peasants—particularly in East Bengal—as a profitable source of income. By 1908 the Indian output exceeded that of Dundee. By 1913-14 the value of jute exports reached £20.5 million. The Great War of 1914-18 gave an impetus to the industry. The Indian Jute Manufacturers' Association, founded in 1884, was renamed in 1902 as the Indian Jute Mills Association. This representative body of European jute manufacturers returned two representatives to the Bengal Legislative Council.

The jute industry was export-oriented, but the coal industry was essential for consumption in the country. Coal was the source of power for the jute mills. It fed the railway engines. 'Modern industries could not have grown without railways, and railways could not have been worked without coal'.

Coal mining commenced in 1820 when a mine was opened at Raniganj, not far from Calcutta. Lord William Bentinck encouraged development of the industry. The Bengal Coal Company was formed in 1843. In 1846 the output was 91,000 tons. The construction of the East Indian Railway increased the demand. The output rose from 293,443 tons in 1857 to 12 million tons in 1912. The Great War of 1914-18 gave an impetus to the coal industry.

Modern industrialization is based on the iron and steel industry which is closely associated with the coal industry. The indigenous iron-smelting industry fell into a moribund condition, and European attempts to start an iron industry in the first half of the nineteenth century failed because fuel and technical skill were not available. Coal began to be used for smelting in 1875, but even then technical skill remained scarce. The Bengal Iron and Steel Company, incorporated in England in 1889, opened its steel works in 1904; but it was not a success.

The large-scale manufacture of steel in India owes its inception to the enterprise of Jamshedji Nusserwanji Tata, a Parsi entrepreneur, who initially rose to prominence as a pro-

moter of cotton mills. He began survey work in the Central Provinces and in the Mayurbhanj State, and rich deposits of iron were discovered. After his death in 1904 his sons built the steel industry at Jamshedpur on the foundations laid by him. In 1905 the Government of India guaranteed to purchase from the Company 20,000 tons of steel rails annually for a period of ten years. This 'very generous concession' enabled the Tata Iron and Steel Works to launch a very successful career. The Great War of 1914-18 created a large demand for munitions. The Tatas increased their output, and found money pouring into their coffers.

In Bengal European private enterprise held the field in coal industry. In the Central Provinces, Central India, Baluchistan and the Punjab the Government directly undertook the development of coal mines to meet the requirements of the State Railways.

It was private European enterprise which showed the way in developing engineering industries. The firms of Jessop and Burn, founded in 1778 and 1781 respectively, were originally engaged in trade; they took up engineering works in the fifties of the nineteenth century. Martin's company was formed in 1892; with it was associated an enterprising Bengali, Sir Rajendra Nath Mukherjee. The private engineering firms built water works, drainage systems, light railways, etc. On the whole, the engineering industry could not make much progress. The Report of the Indian Industrial Commission (1916-18) noted 'the absence in India of a complete system of engineering industries based on the large-scale manufacture of iron and steel'.

The railway workshops, which were mainly concerned with railway carriage building and repairs, represented 'by far the most important development of mechanical engineering in India'. Three ordnance factories—two of them near Calcutta—were founded in the first half of the nineteenth century for the manufacture of cartridges and small arms. There were 13 arms and ammunition factories in 1905. Ordnance stores imported from England represented the major portion of India's defence requirements.

The beginning of the paper industry was marked by the formation of three Companies by Europeans during the period 1874-89. Towards the close of the century nine paper mills were at work. Production reached 57 million pounds in 1909,

but it could not meet the country's needs. The Government was the largest consumer. The Great War of 1914-18 gave an impetus to the industry.

The woollen mills owed their origin mainly to European enterprise. In 1909 there were nine woollen mills, and their output reached nearly four million pounds. The Great War of 1914-18 created a big demand for woollen manufactures.

The leather industry owed its origin to the demand for boots and accoutrements for the army. The value of leather and leather manufactures rose from Rs. 20,289 in 1882-83 to Rs. 8 lakhs in 1913-14. The Great War of 1914-18 did not appreciably affect this industry. India remained a large exporter of hides and skins.

Capital

The supply of capital is always an essential factor in industrial and commercial development. Till the middle of the nineteenth century the supply of British capital was severely restricted by the risks and unknown factors associated with India. In 1847 the Court of Directors noted that 'British capital has never gone out to India except for private commercial objects'. The European Agency Houses provided funds for commercial ventures and indigo plantations. Their working capital consisted mainly of the savings of the Company's servants. The failure of the Union Bank (1848) marked the end of this period. In the early fifties railway projects in India attracted the British investors because a high rate of dividend was guaranteed by the Government. Moreover, British capital began to flow for developing industries like jute and coal with which European entrepreneurs were already familiar. Railways, tramways, coal mines, gold mines, jute mills and tea gardens were the favourite objects of British capital in India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. According to an estimate prepared in 1909, nearly 470 million pounds of British capital were invested in India.

From the British point of view, as Curzon observed, British capital was '*a sine qua non*' to India's development. But nationalist leaders generally felt that 'the introduction of foreign, mostly British, capital for working out the natural resources of the country, instead of being a help is in fact the greatest of hindrances to all real improvements in the economic condition of the people'. Their main argument was that it was the foreign capitalists who reaped the major advantages

resulting from economic development and appropriated the additional wealth produced through it. Foreign investment, they felt, was a form of exploitation, for the foreign enterprises sent out of India all their profits and not merely the interest on capital.

The second half of the nineteenth century saw capital accumulation by the Indian bourgeoisie and its use for industrial development. The capital for the cotton industry came from Indian merchants. The joint-stock companies and the managing agents played a crucial role in collecting and investing money in industrial and commercial enterprises. Indians also held stock in British Companies as also in Government stocks. On the whole, there was a steady increase in the proportion of Indian capital in Indian industries from 1900. 'Speaking generally it may be said that the capital of the cotton industry was mainly Indian, that of the iron and steel industry entirely so, that of the jute industry about half and half, while the coal and plantation industries were mainly British, together with that used for the building of railways, irrigation, and other public works'.

'Enclave economy'

Before the First Great War there were only two major centres of industrial production in India—Calcutta and Bombay. The unequal distribution of factories created an 'enclave economy'. Although the jute industry benefited the peasants of Bengal to some extent, it did not promote the growth of any substantial Indian business class. The effects of foreign investment in plantations in Eastern India did not spread widely among the indigenous population. In the Bombay-Ahmadabad region Indian entrepreneurs were in a better position, but it was not till after the First Great War that they could become the dominant business group in Western India. No such change occurred in Eastern India; but British control over industry, trade and commerce was affected to some extent by the growing participation of the Marwaris and the Gujaratis.

One result of this 'enclave economy' was the emergence of two distinct regions, generally labelled 'industrially developed' and 'industrially backward'. This division was partially mitigated by industrial changes in the thirties.

Role of the State

India was prevented, in the interest of England, from adopting the policy of State patronage of indigenous industry (including tariff protection of Indian goods against imported goods) which helped to industrialize Canada, Australia and South Africa. This was done by the British rulers in pursuance of their professed policy of free trade. Indian industries could not be offered protection because the interest of the 'Home manufacturers' had to be safeguarded. Joseph Chamberlain, a leading statesman of England, said in 1896 : 'The Empire is Commerce'.

In order to meet the budget deficit caused by the 'Sepoy Mutiny' the import duties on British cotton goods was raised to 10 per cent in 1860. Under pressure from the 'Home manufacturers' the coarser varieties of British cotton goods were exempted from duty in 1878. In 1882 all import duties—except those on salt and liquor—were abolished. Lord Ripon declared that the Indian customs tariff had been remodelled on the basis of 'free trade principles' although 'a considerable section of the Indian community regarded this measure as having been dictated in the interests of England'.

In the nineties a change of policy was necessitated by the Government's financial difficulties. In 1894 an import duty of 5 per cent was imposed on British cotton manufactures. In 1896 it was reduced to $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent; simultaneously an excise duty of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent was imposed on cloth produced in Indian mills. R. C. Dutt pointed out that the excise duty 'disables the Indian manufacturer from competing with the manufacturer of Japan and China' and 'stifles the new steam-mills of India'. The output in the Indian cotton mills declined.

Nationalist opinion not only protested against such unfair treatment of Indian industries but also demanded positive State aid for their development. As early as 1853 the British Indian Association of Calcutta urged the House of Commons to provide for 'encouragement of the manufactures and commerce of the country'. In 1902 the Indian National Congress recommended that 'practical steps in the shape of State encouragement be taken for the revival and development of indigenous art and manufactures and for the introduction of new industries'.

The Swadeshi Movement in the early years of the present century represented the nationalist reaction to the import of

foreign goods under Government patronage. Its central idea was that Indians should use indigenous goods in preference to foreign goods even if the former happened to be dearer in price or inferior in quality. Before 1906 the *swadeshi* idea was primarily based on economic considerations. As early as 1849 Gopalrao Deshmukh of Poona advocated the use of Indian products in place of imported goods. In Bengal the idea was propagated through the *Hindu Mela* (or *National Mela*) founded by Nabagopal Mitra in 1867. The Government's tariff policy contributed to the conversion of an idea into a movement. Following the Partition of Bengal (1905) the nationalists used the *swadeshi* idea as an effective weapon for fighting their political battle.

Foreign trade

India's foreign trade took big strides forward during the second half of the nineteenth century. Between 1834-5 and 1838-9 the annual average value of imports and exports was 18.64 *lakhs*; in 1904-5 it rose to 318.06 *lakhs*. Both imports and exports increased considerably in volume as also in value. The exports generally exceeded the imports.

It was a commercial revolution in a quantitative sense; but there was also a radical change in the character of foreign trade. Traditionally India was primarily an exporter of manufactures and importer of precious metals and luxury products. There was a drastic change in this pattern as a result of British rule. After 1813, and particularly after 1858, India became an exporter largely of agricultural raw materials and food grains and an importer of manufactured goods. This pattern was changed to some extent by the import of iron, steel and machineries which gave a new turn to India's industrial production. Gradually machine-made cotton textiles and jute products found their way into export trade.

From the British point of view the development of foreign trade 'afforded a remarkable illustration of the increase in the material wealth of the country'. This view was contested by the nationalist leaders who argued that the impact of foreign trade on the mass of the people was harmful. They were particularly critical of the export of foodgrains which they connected with frequency of famines.

2. PUBLIC FINANCE, CURRENCY AND EXCHANGE

Taxation

The financial policy of the Government of India in the second half of the nineteenth century was determined primarily by such factors as the expenses incurred for the suppression of the 'Sepoy Mutiny', the large increase in military expenditure as a result of Anglo-Russian rivalry in Central Asia, the fall in the gold value of silver, and the rapid expansion of railways. As expenditure increased, taxation also increased. Dadabhai Naoroji and R. C. Dutt were highly critical of official policy, for the burden of taxation fell heavily on the masses of the people and it created distress because the *per capita* national income was very low. On the other hand, the British administrators argued that most probably India was the most lightly-taxed country in the world.

The gross revenue of the Government of India increased from Rs. 74.3 crores in 1880 to Rs. 172.2 crores in 1904. The increase of income during the period 1880-1904 was achieved, according to official opinion, without additional measures of taxation. This was treated by the Secretary of State for India in 1901 as an illustration of the 'stability and recuperative power in the financial system of India'.

The chief sources of income were land-revenue, salt tax, opium and excise revenue, customs revenue and income-tax.

Land-revenue was the most important source of public revenue. It amounted to Rs. 60.79 crores in 1901-02. There was a steady increase which was attributed by official opinion mainly to extension of cultivation.

The tax on salt was the second most valuable source of revenue. The mode of taxing salt, as also the rates of the tax, differed from province to province. It was not till 1882 that a uniform rate was adopted for the whole of India excluding Burma. In 1902 the gross income from the tax amounted to Rs. 9.1 crores. The nationalist view was that a prime necessity of life like salt should not be taxed. Moreover, the salt tax was 'unjust and vicious' because it fell most heavily on 'the poorest of the poor'. From the days of Dadabhai Naoroji to those of Gandhi it was a prime target of attack of the nationalist leaders.

Another important source of revenue was the excise duty on intoxicating spirits, hemp drugs and opium. The gross

revenue drawn from country-spirits in 1902-03 was Rs. 6.64 crores. The net opium revenue amounted to Rs. 4.97 crores in 1900-01.

The income-tax was introduced in 1860 by James Wilson, the first Finance Member in the Governor-General's Council. It was abolished in 1865. In later years taxation on personal incomes was imposed in different forms. In 1886 the income-tax was reimposed. The average-net income-tax revenue during the years 1891-92 to 1901-02 was about Rs. one crore and 78 lakhs. Nationalist opinion was generally in favour of the income-tax after 1886, but there was a continuous demand for raising the exemption limit so that the low-income groups might not come within the scope of this direct tax.

A very small portion of the total revenues came from customs. It was contributed mostly by the Europeans and the rich Indians who were the principal consumers of imported goods.

Expenditure

The level of public expenditure was high, and not only the nationalist leaders but also some British administrators advocated economy.

Military expenditure was by far the largest head of expenditure in the budget. In 1904-5 it amounted to Rs. 30.22 crores or nearly 51.9 per cent of the total net expenditure. Moreover, India paid a large subsidy (which amounted to £100,000 in 1900) to the Royal Navy of England for undertaking responsibility for the general naval defence of the country. The nationalist leaders were sharp and persistent critics of the heavy and ever-growing military expenditure to which they attributed the heavy taxation. The Congress urged 'the necessity for the reduction of, instead of the continual increase in, the military expenditure'. The burden imposed on India was intended to serve—it was felt—England's imperial interest outside India. Gokhale observed that British policy was to use India's resources 'for engaging in a race with European Powers to absorb Asiatic Kingdoms'.

The level of civil expenditure was high too, and it was another target of nationalist criticism. The administration, it was argued, was too costly for a poor country like India. The western system of administration was expensive, and the European officials had to be paid high salaries. This was one

of the grounds for the nationalist demand for the Indianisation of the public services.

'Home Charges'

The term 'Home Charges' was used to mean the expenses incurred by the Government of India in Britain. These consisted of payment of interest on the public debt of India and the guaranteed railways, the cost of military and other stores supplied to India, and the civil and military charges paid in England on account of India, including the Secretary of State's establishment at the India Office and the payment of pensions and allowances to European officials of the Government of India. These payments were criticised by the nationalist leaders as a source of the 'drain' which impoverished India.

Provincial Finance

One important change introduced by the Charter Act of 1833 was the centralization of public finance under the control of the Government of India. The Provincial Governments lost the financial powers which they had been enjoying since the establishment of the Company's political power. The Provincial Governments were absolutely dependent on the sums annually assigned to them by the Government of India. Every new item of expenditure had to receive the prior approval of the Government of India. This rigid system was gradually changed, and the financial system was progressively decentralized, during the years 1870-1912. The Mont-Ford Reforms separated the Central and Provincial revenues.

Currency and exchange

In 1835 a uniform rupee coinage was introduced; the silver standard was adopted and gold coins ceased to be legal tender. Under the Coinage Act of 1870 the Government was obliged to mint rupees on private account in exchange for silver bullion. The value of the rupee was now determined by the market price of silver. Thus the currency was put on a natural basis. The exchange value of the rupee in relation to the British currency generally approximated 2 shillings.

The currency problem arose when the gold value of silver began to decline in the early seventies. The rupee depreciated in relation to the currencies based on gold, including the British currency. By 1893-94 the exchange value of the rupee went down. India's 'loss by exchange', i.e., 'the difference between the actual number of rupees paid by the

Government in any particular year, and the number of rupees which would have been required if the exchange value of the rupee had remained at the conventional rate of 2 shillings', rose to Rs. 12.3 *crores* of rupees in 1894-95. The total loss during the years 1875-98 was nearly 154 *crores* of rupees. Its economic effects were far-reaching. Foreign trade, especially import trade, suffered, and complaints came from the mercantile community. The British officials in India incurred losses in remitting money to England. The flow of British capital to India was discouraged and retarded. Above all, the finances of the Government of India were adversely affected, for it had to remit increasing amounts to England to meet the 'Home Charges'.

In order to meet this difficulty an Act was passed in 1893 by which the mints were closed to the unrestricted coinage of silver on private account. At the same time the Government fixed 1s. 4d. as the rate at which rupees or notes would be supplied to the public in exchange for gold coins and bullion. The rupee lost its 'natural' value, i.e., the value of the amount of silver contained in it, and acquired an 'artificial' or enhanced value. It was also decided that sovereigns and half-sovereigns were henceforth to be received in payment of public dues. These were preliminary steps towards the introduction of gold standard.

By an Act passed in 1899 the value of the rupee was fixed at 1s. 4d. and sovereigns and half-sovereigns were made legal tender at this rate. Although the rupee remained unlimited legal tender, it became a token coin. This system was criticised by nationalist opinion. The Congress warned that it would 'add to the indebtedness of the poorer classes in India, depreciate the value of the savings in the shape of silver ornaments, and virtually add to their rents and taxes'.

Though gold coins became legal tender, the public demand was for rupees. The Government had to resume silver coinage on a considerable scale. The net coinage of rupees in 1912 was 16.3 *crores*. The Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance (the Chamberlain Commission) reported in 1914 in favour of a gold exchange standard.

Banking

The Presidency Banks of Bengal, Bombay and Madras were established in 1836, 1840 and 1843 respectively under Acts passed by the Government of India. These had the right

to issue notes. The Government of India participated in their management. After the failure of the Bank of Bombay (1866) the Presidency Banks Act was passed in 1876. The Government ceased to be a share-holder. The powers of the Banks were restricted in regard to borrowing and lending and they were not allowed to deal in exchange. In 1921 the Presidency Banks were amalgamated to form the Imperial Bank of India.

The Exchange Banks (private British and foreign banks) filled up the vacuum created by the fall of the European Agency Houses. They had their headquarters outside India. They controlled the financing of export and import trade.

The Gujaratis, the Marwaris and the Chetties established many banking houses. The establishment of joint-stock banks with limited liability was permitted by an Act passed in 1860. Most of the private banks established under this Act were managed and controlled by Europeans. Private Indian banking received an impetus from the Swadeshi Movement; several leading Indian banks were established during the years 1906-13.

The Government took considerable interest in developing Post Office Savings Banks. These were established in the Presidency towns in 1833. In 1882-83 the Post Office started a general savings banks system.

3. AGRICULTURE

Systems of land tenure

The Zamindari, the Mahalwari, the Talukdari, the Malguzari and the Ryotwari systems prevailed in different parts of India. In Oudh settlement was made with the talukdars after the 'Sepoy Mutiny'. In the Punjab the Mahalwari system was introduced. The jagirdars continued to exist; but settlement was made directly with the *mahals* or villages, although an important co-sharer was usually selected to undertake the primary liability of paying the land-revenue. A large body of small proprietors grew up.

The nationalist leaders were practically unanimous in their preference for permanent settlement. Ranade and R. C. Dutt were prominent spokesmen for this view, and the Congress demanded that 'fixity and permanency' should be given to the Government land-revenue demand. There was, however, no agreement on the question whether such settlement should be made with zamindars or with ryots. Generally speak-

ing, the nationalist leaders did not demand the abolition of the zamindari tenure; they saw little difference between the ryotwari tenure and the zamindari tenure so far as the welfare of the ryot was concerned. The essence of the nationalist demand was that, as R. C. Dutt stated, 'protection be granted to the cultivator of each province under the land system under which he lives'.

Position of the peasantry

The land-revenue was the most important source of public revenue. It contributed Rs. 23.99 crores out of Rs. 60.79 crores in 1901-02. There was a steady increase of land-revenue receipts. Official opinion attributed it to extension of cultivation and rise of prices, not to the high rates or harsh methods of realisation.

The receipts of the Government did not represent the total amount paid by the ryots. The zamindars resorted to rack-renting. Various intermediaries between the zamindars and the ryots profited at their cost. Even in the ryotwari areas small peasant proprietors gradually lost ground. Apart from the high incidence of rent and cesses the tenants were sometimes victimised by eviction and harassing litigation. Circumstances compelled the depressed ryots to transfer their lands to non-agricultural classes such as money-lenders, traders and middle-class men engaged in professions. This led to a steady increase in the number of landless labourers.

The Santa! insurrection before the 'Sepoy Mutiny' and the indigo disturbances after it—both in Bengal—were special types of agrarian unrest. The former was directed against encroachment upon land, crafty money-lending and dishonest trading, and the latter against the European indigo-planters' oppression. The Pabna disturbances in the early seventies affected several districts which now form part of Bangladesh. The struggle was directed against the local zamindars. Agrarian discontent in the Deccan region of the Bombay Presidency found expression in serious riots in 1875. Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak tried to organize a virtual no-tax campaign in 1896 in famine hit Maharashtra.

Tenancy legislation

The Rent Act of 1859 was intended to provide some relief for ryots in the Permanent Settlement zone (Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Benares). With certain exceptions 'occupancy right' was given to every ryot who had cultivated or held land for a

period of twelve years. In effect, this Act safeguarded the interests of *jotedars* and rich peasants. A far more comprehensive measure was the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 which was not substantially amended till 1928. It provided for the ryots fixity of tenure, fair rent and right of free sale under certain restrictions. The problem of share-croppers (*bargadars*) was left untouched.

Several Acts affecting landlord-tenant relations in Oudh, the North-Western Provinces and the Central Provinces were passed between the years 1866 and 1901. The Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act of 1879 was an important anti-money-lender measure. Restrictions on alienation of land in the Punjab were imposed by the Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1900. It prohibited the permanent alienation of land by a hereditary cultivator except to agriculturists, but temporary alienation for a maximum period of twenty years was allowed.

In order to curb the greed of the money-lenders by introducing a new system of rural credit the Co-operative Credit Societies Act of 1904 was passed by Curzon's Government. The co-operative movement developed slowly.

Irrigation

During Dalhousie's administration the Public Works Department was created and some irrigation works were undertaken, specially in the North-Western Provinces and in the Madras Presidency. The importance of irrigation for protection from famine was recognized by the Famine Commissions.

At the beginning of the present century the major portion of irrigation works was concentrated in the Punjab. The Irrigation Commission of 1901 prepared a comprehensive report on the possibilities of irrigation in India. It recommended further development of irrigation in the Punjab, Sind, the Madras Presidency and the United Provinces. Public investment in irrigation increased from 1903 onwards.

Commercialization of agriculture

'Commercialization of agriculture, i.e., production of crops for market sales rather than for family uses, started in the early years of the nineteenth century and gained in momentum after the opening up of the country by roads and railways in the middle of the century.' The peasants needed cash owing to the introduction of cash assessments in the revenue system. Greater use of money for marketing and credit purposes became

an important feature of rural economy. The growing trading and commercial classes purchased cash crops in the villages and encouraged their cultivation by offering advances and loans to the peasantry. The relatively higher prices of cash crops was an incentive; land was diverted from production of food to cultivation of cash crops. The agricultural policy of the Government of India encouraged production of cash crops like jute and cotton to meet the raw material requirements of British industry.

The Lancashire cotton manufacturers procured the bulk of their raw cotton supplies from the United States. As dependence on a single source of supply was risky, they became interested in increased cultivation of good raw cotton in India. Procurement of raw cotton in India became an urgent necessity for the British textile industry during the American Civil War (1861-64). For some years there was a boom for Indian cotton-producers. During the sixties export not only of cotton but also of some other raw materials like jute and oilseeds was considerably increased.

The commercialization of agriculture hardly benefited the producers in the long run. The lion's share of the profits was taken by the big traders and the middlemen. There were fluctuations in prices as a result of changes in the pattern of international trade. The producers of agricultural exports suffered from this instability, for in a period of falling prices the farm-door prices were cut down by the profit-seeking traders. Moreover, the expansion of commercial agriculture took place generally at the expense of food crops. In certain regions too much importance was given to a single commercial crop. This happened, for instance, in the case of jute in East Bengal (now Bangladesh).

Nationalist economic thinkers like R. C. Dutt attributed the cultivation and export of cash crops mainly to the burdensome land taxes imposed on the peasantry. The farmers required cash to meet the pressure of the land-revenue demand. In Dutt's view India's advantage lay in the production of cotton textiles and not in the production of raw cotton for the Lancashire mills.

4. FAMINES

Recurrence of famines

The half century following the 'Sepoy Mutiny' was marked

by agricultural distress, scarcities and famines.

During the years 1850-79 the country suffered from several severe famines. The famine of 1860-61 in the North-Western Provinces almost equalled in intensity the famine of 1837 in that region. The deficiency of rainfall added to the crisis arising out of disturbances connected with the 'Sepoy Mutiny' which had led to plunder and burning of stores of grain and interruption of cultivation. The Government's relief measures were limited to provision for employment on famine works and distribution of free food to destitutes unable to work. The population affected was estimated at 13 millions.

The famine of 1865-66 in Orissa, Bengal and Bihar affected a vast area. In Orissa the principal cause of distress was the deficiency of food supply. The local officials believed wrongly that large stores of food were available with the people. The suffering of the people was aggravated by a 'want of foresight, perception and precaution (on the part of the officials) regarding the impending calamity', as the Governor-General observed. The Orissa Famine Enquiry Commission (1866), with Sir George Campbell as Chairman, blamed not only the local officials but also the system of administration in Bengal which restricted the powers and responsibilities of the executive officers and prevented their 'interference with the mass of the people' who were controlled by the zamindars. The relief works started by the Government failed to attract any large number of sufferers, for the wages were very low. Suffering in Bengal and Bihar was mitigated to some extent by supplies brought from the neighbouring regions. The Government's relief measures were 'extremely belated, inadequate and ill-organized'. The total mortality amounted to 1,35,000.

The extension of the famine in Orissa to the Madras Presidency in 1866-67 was due to 'the rise in prices as the result of export of food grains rather than absolute failure of crops or cessation of agricultural employment'. Relief was given in the usual forms, i.e., employment of able-bodied men on relief works, and charitable relief to those who were unable to work. The total mortality amounted to 4,50,000.

The famine of 1868-70 in Rajasthan, the North-Western Provinces, the Punjab, the Central Provinces, and the Bombay Presidency was due to widespread draught. In Rajasthan the death roll ranged between one-third and one-fourth of the total population. In the North-Western Provinces the Government

issued the famous 'save every life' instructions. 'Every district officer', it was stated, 'would be held personally responsible that no deaths occurred from starvation which could have been avoided by any exertion or arrangement on his part or that of his subordinates'. Even then gratuitous relief did not touch more than one per cent of the population.

During the famine of 1873 in Bengal and Bihar severity was checked by import of supplies from Burma which arrested rise in prices of food grains as also by administration of relief on a more liberal scale than before. Scarcity prevailed in the North-Western Provinces and in Oudh simultaneously with famine in Bengal and Bihar.

The famine of 1876-78 affected half of the Madras Presidency, the whole of the Mysore State, a large part of the Hyderabad State, and the Deccan districts of the Bombay Presidency. An area of 2,05,600 square miles and a population of 36.4 million were affected. 'In respect of the area and the population affected and the duration and intensity of distress it was the most grievous calamity of its kind that the country experienced till then, since the beginning of the nineteenth century'. The Madras Government made liberal money advances to the distressed population for purchase of seeds as also for construction of wells and tanks. There was remission of land-revenue as well.

During the Punjab famine of 1878 the Provincial Government 'disclaimed all intention to enter upon a system of permanent poor relief'. Such arrangements, it was stated, would be 'impracticable' as well as 'foreign to the actual needs and immemorial practices of the country'.

During the years 1880-95 the country was free from any major agricultural calamity or severe economic distress for the masses. There was distress in different areas—in the Bengal Presidency (1884-85, 1888-89, 1890-92), in the Madras Presidency (1884-85, 1888-89, 1890-92), in the Bombay Presidency (1879-80), in the Central Provinces (1886-87, 1894), in the North-Western Provinces (1880), in the Punjab (1884). But the distress was local, the rise in prices was limited, and food was freely available to the people in the market. The main problem was to provide work to the unemployed to enable them to earn wages which they could use for purchasing food.

There were two severe famines and several scarcities during the years 1896-1908.

Following a limited famine in Bundelkhand in 1895-96, there was a great famine spreading to almost every part of India. It affected a total area of 5,04,940 square miles and a population of 96,931,000. The loss of crop amounted to about one-third of the annual production. The immediate cause was the failure of autumn rains. 'The success actually attained in the relief of distress and saving of human life was, if not complete, far greater than any that had yet been recorded in famines comparable with it in point of extent, severity or duration'.

The famine of 1899-1900 was described by Curzon as the severest and most terrible of all the famines that had afflicted the country in the nineteenth century. Apart from a large area and population in some Princely States, this famine affected 189,000 square miles and 28 million people in British India. Among the most severely affected regions were the Central Provinces and Berar, Rajasthan and the Bombay Presidency.

There were local famines and scarcities in the Deccan districts of the Bombay Presidency (1905-6), Bundelkhand (1905-6), Bihar and East Bengal (1906), and the United Provinces (1907-8).

Causes of famines

Curzon argued in 1900 that the real cause of recurring famines was failure of rains and the consequent loss of crops. By 1902 he 'had become even more convinced that Indian famines were like an act of God which the hand of man could do nothing to stay or deflect'. As a matter of fact, however, 'the severity of famine and the intensity of distress caused by it were determined by a variety of social and economic factors' such as the quantity of existing food stocks in the affected region, the facilities of transport, the extent of the rise in prices, the availability of employment, etc. As early as 1861 Colonel Baird Smith defined Indian famines as 'famines of work rather than of food'. R. C. Dutt connected famine with the high incidence of land-revenue and the poverty of the peasantry in the ryotwari areas. The Government's reluctance to 'disorganize and paralyse private trade' indirectly encouraged profiteering in the food grains trade and increased the people's distress.

Famine policy

The Report of the Orissa Famine Enquiry Commission (1866) 'laid the foundations of a definite famine policy' and made some useful recommendations. This indicated a change of official outlook, but the change was not very effective. As

Campbell says, 'the idea rather prevailed that the Orissa failure was a personal failure (i.e., failure of the officials concerned) which need not occur again'.

This was not unnatural at that time. The Government had hardly any statistical or general but accurate information about the distribution of the population and of the cultivated area, the amount of food production, existing food stocks in different regions, the food habits of the people and the general economic condition of the masses. Censuses were taken in 1872 and 1881, but the data collected were in most cases imperfect and incomplete. So policies had to be formulated, and vital decisions had to be taken in regard to import of food grains, regulation of prices and the people's capacity to withstand the pressure of famine, on the basis of the opinions of local officials which were often incorrect. Secondly, the excessive confidence of the Government and the bureaucracy in *laissez faire* philosophy made them unwilling to interfere with the free operation of economic forces. Thirdly, the Government's financial resources were too inadequate to permit any liberality of expenditure on relief during famines which came in quick succession. The policy of 'saving life' had to be reconciled with the necessity of securing the maximum economy in relief expenditure.

The Famine Commission of 1878-80, appointed by Lytton and presided over by Sir Richard Strachey, recognized the duty of the State to offer relief in times of famine, subject to the condition that relief should be so administered 'as not to check the growth of thrift and self-reliance among the people', or to impair the traditional sense of 'moral obligation of mutual assistance'. It recommended the preparation of a Famine Code which the Local Governments would adapt to the circumstances of their provinces and would in future administer subject to financial control from the Government of India. It urged the need of collection of statistical information relating to the condition of the peasantry.

The principal recommendations of the Commission on distribution of relief during famine were as follows: (1) Employment on works should be offered before the physical efficiency of applicants had been affected by starvation. (2) Gratuitous relief in the form of money, grain or cooked food should be distributed according to local circumstances. (3) Facilities should be given to private trade to supply and distribute food. (4) There should be suspension or remission of rents in appro-

priate cases, and loans should be given for purchases of seed grains and bullocks. (5) 'The cost of relief must be so localised as to bring home to its administrators a sense of personal responsibility for expenditure'. (6) When provincial revenues could not cope with the demand for famine relief these must be assisted from the funds of the Government of India.

The Commission's proposals were generally accepted. It was decided that Rs. 15,000,000 would always be entered in the budget under the head 'Famine relief and Insurance'. A Famine Code was issued in 1883. 'It formed a guide and a basis for the various provincial Famine Codes which were subsequently prepared, approved by the Government of India, and revised again and again as experience widened'. Famine policy was now founded on two postulates. First, the State could not undertake to interfere in every individual and isolated case of distress; it would apply its resources only when 'a natural calamity affecting a material portion of the population occurred'. Secondly, as famine was mainly a problem of temporary lack of employment for the mass of agricultural population, the principal form of relief needed was the opening of relief works and offer of employment to those who needed it. Gratuitous relief was to be provided only for those who were unable to work due to physical incapacity or social compulsions.

With the adoption of the Famine Codes the system and machinery for relief were put on a regular footing. During the famine of 1896-97 the provisions of the Famine Codes were put to a severe test. In 1898 Curzon appointed a Famine Commission with Sir James Lyall as President. While adhering largely to the views expressed by the Strachey Commission, it suggested some alterations to the maxims proposed in 1880. Before the new proposals had been fully considered by the Government of India the famine of 1899-1900 fell upon the country. Another Famine Commission was appointed with Sir Anthony MacDonnell as President. Its Report emphasized the value of 'moral strategy'—early suspension of revenue and rents, early distribution of advances for purchase of seed and cattle, and the sinking of temporary wells. It suggested enlistment of non-official assistance for famine relief on a larger scale. It expressed preference in particular circumstances of village works to the large public works which had hitherto been the backbone of relief schemes. These suggestions influenced the provincial Famine Codes.

The MacDonnell Commission refuted the nationalist allegation that the land revenue demand was excessive. Curzon held the same view. In order to promote public confidence he announced a new policy on regulation of rents (1902). The Government's policy, he declared, was to progressively reduce the land-revenue. For this purpose it would avoid enhancement of rent except on the ground of increase of irrigation or rise in prices, adjust collection of land-revenue to the variations of the seasons and the circumstances of the people, and provide for reduction of assessment in cases of local deterioration in the agricultural situation.

Three measures adopted by Curzon were linked with the Government's famine policy. The Irrigation Commission (1901) proposed the further development of irrigation in certain provinces. It observed that 'the whole of India can never be protected from famine by irrigation alone, but irrigation can do much to restrict the area and mitigate the intensity of famine'. The Co-operative Societies Act (1904) was intended to supply agricultural credit and save the peasantry from the extortion of money-lenders. The Punjab Land Alienation Act (1900) severely restricted the transfer of agricultural land to non-agriculturists.

The recurrence of famines undermined the basis of paternal government. They showed that peace, an incorrupt judiciary, and an active administration would not necessarily bring security to the peasant, contentment to the townsman or prosperity to the country as a whole.

5. POVERTY AND DRAIN

Poverty

Among the Indian leaders who made an intensive investigation into the country's economic maladies the most prominent were Dadabhai Naoroji, Mahadev Govind Ranade and Ramesh Chandra Dutt. Their central theme was the poverty of the Indian masses. Naoroji published his *magnum opus*, *The Poverty of India*, in 1876. Ranade discussed the economic issues connected with poverty in the *Quarterly Journal of the Poona Sarvajanic Sabha* during the two closing decades of the century. R. C. Dutt's two-volume *Economic History of India* was published in 1901-03. One of the primary purposes of this invaluable work was to explain 'the deep-seated cause of

the poverty of the Indian people'. This tradition of nationalist interpretation of India's economic problems was continued by Gopal Krishna Gokhale during the early years of the present century.

The nationalist leaders not only stressed the existence of 'abject' and 'stark' poverty but also argued that it was increasing. The Congress adopted a resolution in 1891 stating that 'fully fifty millions of the population, a number yearly increasing, are dragging out a miserable existence on the verge of starvation, and in every decade several millions actually perish by starvation'. Similar resolutions were passed in later years. Naoroji argued in 1873 that the *per capita* income was Rs. 20. The recurrence of famines was regarded as conclusive evidence of the miserable poverty and starvation of the people. Gokhale declared in his budget speech of 1902 that the material condition of the masses was 'steadily deteriorating'.

The British official view was naturally different. Official reports compiled during Lord Dufferin's administration (1888) indicated that the condition of even 'the lower classes of the agricultural population is not one which need cause any great anxiety at present'. An official Report on Moral and Material Progress of India (1891-92) stated that the 'ordinary condition of the peasantry, from a material standpoint, is one of sufficiency, according to a standard that is gradually and continuously rising'. The rapid expansion of foreign trade, both in value and volume, the steadily improving revenues without additional measures of taxation, and the increase in prices were cited as evidence of prosperity. Curzon declared that in 1897-98 the *per capita* income was Rs. 30. Famines, it was argued, were due to the caprice of nature and not preventible by Governmental efforts. The size and growth of the population rapidly outran the means of subsistence. The absence of thrift, and the custom of extravagant expenditure on social ceremonies, the habit of frequent recourse to law courts, etc., were among the causes of poverty.

Drain

A prominent theme in nationalist economic thinking was that one of the most important causes of India's poverty was that a part of her national wealth or total annual product was exported to England for which the Indians got no adequate economic or material returns. This was the 'drain theory'. Its

'high priest' was Dadabhai Naoroji. In 1867 he stated that 'out of the revenues raised in India nearly one-fourth goes out of the country and is added to the resources of England'. He argued that this amount, if not drained away, would have been invested in India and increased the people's income. Ranade declared that 'of the national income of India more than one-third was taken away by the British in one form or other'. In 1901 R. C. Dutt observed that one-half of the net revenues of India 'flows annually out of India'.

The Indian leaders' estimates of the drain differed from person to person and from year to year. The general basis of calculation was the difference between exports and imports, but there were other factors as well. R. C. Dutt's conservative estimate was about £20 millions a year in the early years of the present century. India paid no visible tribute to England and there was no transfer of surplus revenue from the Indian to the British treasury. The three important constituents of the drain were the 'Home Charges', the salaries paid to Englishmen employed in Indian administration, and the profits of private British capital invested in trade and industry in India. The last item swelled during the last quarter of the nineteenth century as a result of the extension of railways, growth of internal and external trade, and setting up of plantations, mines, cotton and jute mills, engineering works, etc. India had an export surplus which served as the channel for payment of the 'Home Charges' and transfer of private profits.

'The drain theory was not limited to the narrow concept of export of money or goods, but was based on wider-economic reasoning and consideration'. The drain affected the country's prospects of employment and addition to income. As R. C. Dutt pointed out, when taxes paid by the people are spent in the country, 'the money circulates among the people, fructifies trades, industries, and agriculture, and in one shape or another reaches the mass of the people'; but when the money is sent out of the country, 'it does not stimulate her trades or industries, or reach the people in any form'. The drain really denuded India of its productive capital, and created that shortage of capital which hindered industrial development. In R. C. Dutt's view, the drain flowed mainly out of land-revenue and thus caused impoverishment of the peasantry.

The British reply to these arguments was that the drain really represented payments for services of capital and personnel.

Sir John Strachey said in 1888: 'England receives nothing from India except in return for English services rendered or English capital expended'. The export surplus was accounted for by invisible exports such as shipping services, insurance charges on exports and imports etc. In return for the interest paid to British capital India got railways, irrigation works, plantation industries, etc. In return for the 'Home Charges' India got the services of efficient officers, security against external aggression, etc.

The substance of the argument was that the 'drain' really represented an arrangement which benefited India in different ways and contributed to her modernization. There was some truth in this argument, but Indian nationalist thought never reconciled itself to the very high price exacted by the British rulers for these benefits. The British capitalists sent to England not only the amount of legitimate interest on their capital invested in India but the entire amount of profits. The British pensioners spent their pensions in England.

Apart from its economic aspect the drain theory had grave political implications. It raised the question of the Indian people's attitude towards the nature and purposes of British rule. By exposing the exploitative character of British rule it stimulated the demand for self-government. Its appeal was not limited to the middle-class intelligentsia: it could be easily understood by the masses and serve as a factor in broadening the basis of the country's political demand.

RELIGION AND SOCIETY

1. RELIGION

'The religious reform movements of the nineteenth century were in different degrees endeavours to recast the old religion (Hinduism) into a new form suited to meet the needs of the new society'. Even the Arya Samaj, which aimed apparently at the revival of the social and religious ideas of the Vedic Aryans, intended really to revitalize them in the context of contemporary needs. On the whole, the religious reformers were advocates of progress. Their object was the regeneration of 'a fallen nation—a nation whose primitive greatness lay buried in ruins'. Their thoughts were not confined to spiritual problems. They saw dreams of rescuing India from poverty and despair, and hoped to see her once again as 'the land of poetry, of science, and of civilization'. In a broad sense the religious reform movements were an important aspect of the nationalist movement.

Brahmo Samaj

In Bengal the Brahmo Samaj, which had fallen into moribund condition after the death of Rammohun Roy (1833), was revitalized through a new theological orientation given by Devendranath Tagore (1816-1905), son of Dwarkanath Tagore and father of Rabindranath Tagore, between the years 1847 and 1850. Soon afterwards the younger members of the Samaj began to try 'not only to broaden the basis of Brahmoism by advocating new social ideas but also to apply the dry light of reason even to the fundamental articles of religious belief'. They advocated female education, supported widow remarriage, denounced polygamy and intemperance, and tried to conduct the affairs of the Samaj on 'strict constitutional principles'. They found an able leader in Keshab Chandra Sen (1838-84), born in a distinguished family of Calcutta, who joined the Samaj in 1857, became a wholtime missionary in 1861, and brought to it 'a dynamic force which it had never possessed before'.

The advanced ideas put forward by the young Brahmos led by Keshab were not acceptable to the older section led by Devendranath who refused to be 'drawn away from the old

Hindu lines laid down by Rammohun Roy. The result was a split in the Samaj. The old organization, now known as *Adi Brahmo Samaj*, remained under Devendranath's leadership; Keshab formed a new organization called the *Brahmo Samaj of India*. Declaring that 'Brahmoism is catholic and universal', Keshab insisted upon the renunciation of idolatry as also of caste. Through his own missionary tours in Bombay (1864), Madras (1864) and the North-Western Provinces (1866), as also through the missionary work of his followers, he carried the message of the Brahmo Samaj all over India. He deliberately kept himself and his Samaj aloof from politics and 'openly proclaimed loyalty to the British Government as an article of the creed of his church'. But his radical views on personal liberty and social emancipation had political implications. At his request the Government of India passed the Civil Marriage Act of 1872. Although primarily intended to validate the Brahmo form of marriage which was not valid in the eyes of Hindu Law, it imposed restraints on those who sought to take advantage of it. It made monogamy obligatory and prescribed minimum ages for the bridegroom and the bride—18 and 14 respectively. This was an important measure of social reform, but its actual impact on the Hindu society was minimal.

In 1870 Keshab founded the Indian Reforms Association. It had five Sections; improvement of women, education of working classes, publication of cheap literature, advocacy of temperance, charity. Organizations were started for educating women and publishing books and journals. Although Keshab himself was disowned by the Hindu society, his ideas on education of women and raising of their marriageable age were gradually accepted by the educated Hindus.

Keshab precipitated a crisis in his Samaj by giving his eldest daughter in marriage to the minor Maharaja of Cooch Behar in violation of the Act of 1872. Sivanath Sastri, Ananda Mohan Bose and many others seceded from the *Brahmo Samaj of India* and founded the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj* in 1878. The Brahmo community, numerically very small, was weakened by its division into three units. By the end of the nineteenth century it became a spent force.

From the very beginning the Brahmo movement was basically weak because its membership and influence were mostly confined to urban educated groups. As the educated Hindus began to absorb Brahmo ideas in respect of social and educa-

tional matters without formally renouncing the old religion, the Samaj lost opportunities of numerical expansion.

The Brahmo Samaj made great contributions to the modernization of India in different spheres. In religion it introduced rationalism and thereby shocked the basis of the entire Brahminical system. In society it challenged the caste system and the Brahmin's monopoly of priestly functions; it worked for the general uplift of women, giving them education, raising the age of marriage, supporting remarriage of widows, and opposing polygamy. Its fight against intemperance directed public attention to a social evil. It took interest in the welfare of the working classes. It promoted western education through the foundation of schools and colleges. It contributed to the progress of Bengali literature. Rabindranath Tagore belonged to the most distinguished of Brahmo families. It promoted journalism in Bengali and English. Its advocacy of personal freedom and social equality reacted very powerfully upon the infant national consciousness. The all-India tours of Keshab Chandra Sen, like those of Surendra Nath Banerjee in later years, initiated the process of bringing together on a common platform diverse peoples of India in different regions. Among the stalwarts in the history of India's struggle for freedom were two Brahmo leaders: Ananda Mohan Bose, Bepin Chandra Pal.

Prarthana Samaj

In the forties of the last century the Parmahans Mandali started fighting idolatry and the caste system, and Gopal Hari Deshmukh (known popularly as *Lokहितwadi*) attacked Hindu orthodoxy, in Maharashtra. Keshab Chandra Sen's tour led to the foundation of the *Prarthana Samaj* in Bombay in 1867. Among its leaders were Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, a well known Sanskrit scholar and historian, and Mahadev Gobind Ranade (1842-1901). Although it was powerfully influenced by Brahmo ideas, it did not insist upon a rigid exclusion of idolatry and a definite break from the caste system. It did not regard the Vedas as infallible, nor did it believe in the doctrines of transmigration of human soul and incarnation of God. Its central ideas were 'one positive belief in the unity of God and social reform'—abandonment of caste, introduction of widow remarriage, promotion of female education, abolition of child marriage and of *purdah*, etc.

The ideas of the *Prarthana Samaj* were popularised in the

Telugu country (in the Madras Presidency) by a zealous social reformer, Viresalingam Pantalu.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa

Gadadhar Chattopadhyaya (1836-86), born in a poor Brahmin family in a village not very far from Calcutta, came to be known as *Ramakrishna Paramahansa* when he attained spiritual eminence in later life. His education did not proceed beyond the elementary stage. He was of a religious and contemplative mood from his boyhood. In 1856 he became a priest in the temple of the goddess Kali at Dakshineswar near Calcutta. Instead of following the formal procedure of worship he fell into a state of *divyonmada* ('God-centred frenzy') and passed through different forms of *sadhana* (religious exercise). He married, but instead of living an ordinary householder's life, he saw in his wife the goddess Kali. He attracted many visitors, including Keshab Chandra Sen, and made some disciples among whom the greatest was Swami Vivekananda.

Without formal education in philosophy and the *sastras*, Ramakrishna expressed the basic philosophical ideas and spiritual truths in simple sentences and interesting parables. The realization of God, he taught, was the highest ideal for man. Against the spell of natural science he set the reality of spiritual life. Sectarianism had no place in his teachings; he said that all religions are true and may lead to salvation if sincerely pursued. 'In whatsoever name or form you desire to call God, in that very name or form you will see Him'. He realized divinity in humanity and looked upon the service of mankind as a means to salvation. In an age of growing materialism and sectarian differences he gave Hinduism 'a moral sanction, a fresh philosophical basis, and a new spiritual significance of immense value.

Swami Vivekananda

Narendra Nath Datta (1863-1902), better known as Swami Vivekananda, carried the message of his guru (spiritual master) Ramakrishna Paramahansa all over India as also in Europe and America. Born in an affluent Kayastha family in Calcutta, he received English education in a College run by Protestant Missionaries and became a graduate of Calcutta University. Interested in religious and philosophical speculations from his early years, he was attracted at first to the Brahmo Samaj and then to the philosophy of John Stuart Mill, Hume and Herbert

Spencer. In 1881 he came into contact with Ramakrishna. In his teachings he found what his soul craved for. After the *guru's* death (1886) he organized a fraternity of monks who ceremonially accepted the vows of monasticism by performing Vedic rites and adopted monastic names (1887).

The new monk undertook a pilgrimage in North, West and South India which brought him into contact with the realities of Indian life. He cried in agony: 'A conglomeration of three hundred million souls, resembling men only in appearance, crushed out of life by being down-trodden by their own people and foreign nations . . . without any hope, without any past, without any future . . .' For India fallen and prostrate, the only hope lay in the traditional source of her vitality—religion. But religion was to be revitalized, rescued from century-old superstitions and made responsive to the needs of modern society.

Vivekananda felt that India could secure aid from the West in the material sphere by exporting to the West India's lessons on true spirituality. In 1893 he attended the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in the United States where representatives of different religions from all over the world assembled for an exchange of ideas. In his speeches in this Parliament, as also in the addresses which he delivered at different centres in America, he laid stress on one of Ramakrishna's cardinal teachings, viz., the essential one-ness of all religions. The religion of the Hindus, he declared, 'is based on the laws of love'. His speeches made him a world figure and raised the prestige of India and Hinduism very high'. From America he went to Europe (Paris and London) where his lectures were highly appreciated. On his return to India in 1897 he found tremendous ovations everywhere. He visited America and Europe again in 1899-1900.

Although Vivekananda was proud of India's spiritual heritage, he believed that 'no individual or nation can live by holding itself apart from the community of others'. He advocated a give-and-take policy: 'We should give our ancient spirituality and culture and get in return Western science, technology, methods of raising the standard of life, business integrity and technique of collective effort'.

The principal feature of Vivekananda's social philosophy was his insistence on the uplift of the masses. 'The only God in whom I believe is', he said, 'the sum total of all souls'; and

'above all, he looked upon 'the wicked, the afflicted, the poor of all races' as his God. For him service to the poor and the afflicted was the 'highest religion'. To organize such service he founded the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897.

Philosophically Vivekananda was a Vedantist. He sowed the seeds of Vedanta even in America. He organized monasticism. The principal monastic centre was established at Belur in 1899. But neither Vedanta nor monastic ideals drew him away from the material world around him. He was a humanist, full of tears for the millions who lived in hunger and ignorance, and actively engaged himself in promoting their welfare.

Vivekananda wrote many books, and delivered many lectures, on different aspects of Indian philosophy as also on Indian and international problems. He believed that a healthy system of international politics required India's political freedom and emancipation from poverty. A free and prosperous India could play an effective role in mitigating the evils generated by materialism in the West. Although he was not a political leader, he made a distinct contribution to the growth of nationalism in India. He asked: 'India! Wouldst thou attain, by means of thy disgraceful cowardice, that freedom deserved only by the brave and the heroic?' He said: 'Liberty in thought and action is the only condition of life, growth and well being. Where it does not exist, the man, the race, and the nation must go down'.

Vivekananda claimed that in all that he did he 'merely followed in the footsteps of his *guru*. His dynamic energy and great personality gave a concrete shape to the ideas which lay as seeds in the teachings of Ramakrishna. In a brief life of thirty-nine years he left an abiding impression on India's religious, social and political life.

Arya Samaj

The Arya Samaj was founded by Swami Dayananda Saraswati (1824-83), originally named Mula Sankara, in 1875. Born in an orthodox Brahmin family in Gujarat, Mula Sankara lost faith in the traditional form of Hinduism in his early years. He became a *sannyasi*, wandered all over India, practised *yoga*, associated with the Brahmo leader Keshab Chandra Sen, and established the first Arya Samaj in Bombay (1875). During the remaining eight years of his life he devoted himself to writing, preaching and organizing his followers in different parts of India. He translated the Vedas and wrote three books

of which the most important was *Satyartha Prakash* (in Hindi). His mission secured many adherents in the Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat.

The essence of Dayananda's teachings lay in the formula: 'Back to the Vedas'. In its final form it meant adherence to the *Samhita* portion of the Vedas, particularly the *Rigveda Samhita*, and rejection of the *Upanishads* whenever they contradicted the *Samhitas*. Dayananda rejected the old commentaries on the *Samhitas*, including that of Sayana, and offered his own interpretation in the *Satyartha Prakash*. Theoretically every member of the Arya Samaj was free to interpret the Vedas in the light of his own reason, but in practice Dayananda's interpretation was regarded as final.

The Vedas were declared to be infallible, being based on revelation, and looked upon as an inexhaustible reservoir of all knowledge—spiritual, philosophical, scientific and technical. For instance, a *sutra* of the *Rigveda* was interpreted to mean that 'water is generated by the combination of hydrogen and oxygen'. There was a determined protest against those features of Hinduism which were derived from the Puranas, e.g., worship of images of different gods and goddesses, observance of an infinite number of rituals, acceptance of the ascendancy of the Brahmins, etc. Only the Supreme Being was to be worshipped. There could be no total condemnation of the caste system because it had its roots in the Vedas. But the hereditary principle was denounced, and the four-caste division of society was to be determined by merit of individuals and not by birth.

The Arya Samaj had a meaningful programme of social reform. Complementary to the rejection of the hereditary caste system was the recognition of inter-caste marriage. Men and women were regarded as having equal social rights. Minimum marriageable ages for boys and girls were fixed—at 25 and 16 respectively. Widow remarriage was not favoured. A net work of schools and colleges, established under the auspices of the Arya Samaj, contributed to the spread of western ideas.

The Arya Samaj aimed at promoting unity among the Hindus and strengthening them as a community. Some of its ideas and measures alienated the Muslims and—to some extent—the Sikhs. The *Suddhi* programme—the reconversion of Hindus who had previously been converted to Islam or Chris-

tianity—was an important factor in the communal tension of the period following the First Great War.

Although the Arya Samaj was in some respects a symbol of Hindu revivalism, it played a constructive role in three important sectors. First, the social reform promoted by it contributed to modernization of India. Secondly, its educational activities contributed to the spread of modern knowledge. Thirdly, directly and indirectly it strengthened the national struggle for freedom. The Dayananda Anglo-Vedic College at Lahore became, under the guidance of its distinguished Principal Lala Hansraj, 'the foremost agency for planting a sturdy and independent nationalism in the Punjab'. Sir Valentine Chirol, who investigated the causes of political unrest in India after 1907, regarded the Arya Samaj as a serious menace to British rule.

Theosophical Society

The Theosophical Society was founded in the United States in 1875 by Madame H. P. Blavatsky and Colonel H. S. Olcott. It had three main objects: to form a universal brotherhood of man; to promote studies in ancient religions, philosophies and sciences; to investigate the laws of nature and develop the divine powers latent in man. It was introduced in India by its founders in 1879 and its headquarters were founded at Adyar near Madras in 1886. Its influence spread in India under the leadership of Mrs. Annie Besant who came to this country in 1893 and played an important role in the struggle for freedom in later years.

The Theosophists recognized the Hindu doctrines of *karma* and transmigration of the soul as also the Buddhist doctrine of *nirvana*. They succeeded in attracting many educated Hindus through their subtle arguments which defended the current practices of Hinduism. They reconciled the ideal of universal brotherhood with the caste system as also the unity of the Supreme Being with the worship of numerous gods and goddesses. They improved the moral tone of the Hindu society by demanding complete abstinence from intoxicating drinks and absolute social purity.

A movement led by westerners who glorified Indian religious and philosophical traditions naturally promoted self-confidence among Indians and strengthened nationalist ideas. Mrs. Annie Besant wrote in 1905: 'The needs of India are, among others, the development of a national spirit, an educa-

tion founded on Indian ideals and enriched, not dominated, by the thought and culture of the West'.

Islam

The 'soul-less, dry and rigidly puritanic Wahabi discipline' lost much of its direct impact on the Indian Muslims after the 'Sepoy Mutiny'. But the *Dar-al-Ulum*, founded at Deoband in Uttar Pradesh in 1866, though officially adhering to the Hanafi School, followed the Wahabis in most matters of ritual and ceremony. It attracted students not only from different parts of India but from the neighbouring Muslim countries as well. Maulana Shibli Numani founded the *Nadwat-al-Ulama* in Lucknow. It adopted a more realistic and progressive outlook than the Deoband academy.

Modernization of Islam in India was initiated by the Muhammadan Literary Society founded in Calcutta by Abdul Latif in 1863. It sponsored discussion of religious, social and political questions in the light of modern ideas and encouraged the Muslims to take to western education. This programme was developed by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-98), the greatest leader of the Indian Muslim community in the nineteenth century. His manifold services to his co-religionists will be explained in the next chapter. Born and brought up in a devout Muslim family in Delhi, and educated in his early years in the traditional manner in Arabic and Persian, he liberalised his views on Islam in the light of western education after the 'Sepoy Mutiny'. He wrote several works on the life of Muhammad and on the Quran. He was cautiously rational in respect of abstract theology. He tried to reconcile Darwin's theory of evolution with the Quranic tenets of creation and fall of Adam. He was prepared to reject that part of the Muslim Tradition (*hadis*) which he considered fictitious. But he was a conservative in respect of ritual and his views on *jihād* (holy war), slavery and polygamy indicated his orthodoxy. He was not a philosopher. His scholarship was superficial except in certain traditional branches of Islamic learning.

Syed Ameer Ali (1849-1928)—lawyer, politician and historian—interpreted Islam from the Shia point of view in his books, *The Spirit of Islam*, *The Ethics of Islam* and *A Short History of the Saracens*. He regarded Islam as a superior religion—'the Religion of Mankind'—and Muhammad as 'the greatest Reformer the world has ever produced'. He made a

halting attempt to reconcile the Shia theory of the 'Imamate' with the Sunni theory of the 'Caliphate'.

Sir Mohammad Iqbal (1873-1938)—scholar, University teacher, lawyer, politician—was primarily a philosopher and a poet. In the religious and cultural spheres he was a revivalist, anxious to recover what his community had lost. But his programme of reconstruction of Islam centred round its emancipation from the narrow interpretations of the medieval theologians. He was a believer in Pan-Islam. Islam, he said, was 'non-territorial in character', and its aim was 'to furnish a model for the final combination of humanity by drawing its adherents' from many races. This ideal was a prominent feature of Muslim religious thought in India from the closing decades of the nineteenth century.

Khilafat Movement

The Khilafat problem was an offshoot of the First Great War. It greatly stirred the religious emotions of the Indian Muslims. For a brief period the agitation for the maintenance of the Sultan of Turkey as Caliph became an integral part of the nationalist movement led by Gandhi. The agitation collapsed after the abolition of the Caliphate by Kamal Pasha in 1924.

Khaksar Movement

The Khaksar Movement, organized by Inayatullah Mashriqi, aimed at uniting the Muslims by restoring the original Islamic spirit of service to God and His creatures. The Khaksars were organized on a military basis. They played a militant political role and their demands included the creation of a Muslim State (Pakistan) extending from Karachi to Calcutta.

Sikhism

During the closing decades of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century some Hindu religious practices, such as *Sati* and making offerings to temples, had crept into the Sikh society. A movement for regeneration of the Sikh society through the elimination of such Hindu practices, the abolition of social evils, and spread of western education began in the eighties of the last century. An organization called the *Singh Sabha* and the Khalsa College at Amritsar played an important role. A central association, called the *Chief Khalsa Diwan*, with headquarters at Amritsar, guided the reform movement and worked through missionaries.

Sikhism was misinterpreted by some European writers

such as Trumpp, the first translator of the *Adi Granth* into English. An Englishman, Max Arthur Macauliffe, offered the traditional and orthodox interpretation of the lives and teachings of the Sikh Gurus in his monumental work, *The Sikh Religion* (1909).

The Akali movement in the twenties of the present century aimed at purification of the management of the *gurdwaras* which were in the hands of corrupt *mahants*. The purpose was achieved through direct struggle and official intervention in the form of legislation. In the struggle, which was organized by the *Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee* founded in 1920, about 10,000 Akalis courted imprisonment. At last the Government yielded. The Gurdwara Act of 1925 placed all important *gurdwaras* under the control of the *Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee*.

2. SOCIETY

Social Reform

Religious reform and social reform were two aspects of the same rationalist spirit which aimed at the regeneration of India. At first nearly all the religious reformers contributed to the social reform movement. Gradually that movement became secular in approach, and Gandhi made it an integral part of the struggle for freedom.

In Bengal social reform was promoted by the Brahmo Samaj as also by Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar who, though formally an orthodox Brahmin, took little interest in conventional rituals. In Maharashtra the leading social reformer of the nineteenth century was Mahadev Gobind Ranade. Unlike the Brahmo leaders of Bengal, Ranade and other leaders of the Prarthana Samaj adopted a moderate programme which did not cut them off from the orthodox Hindu society. Anxious to reform the Hindu society from within, the Prarthana Samaj tried to raise a platform from which reforms acceptable to all sects and sub-sects could be propagated. For discussing questions relating to social reform Ranade started the National Social Conference (1887) as a subsidiary organ of the Indian National Congress which, being a political organization of all religious communities, could not involve itself in issues relating to any particular community. It was merely an annual gathering to

deliberate and pass resolutions which it had no machinery to implement.

The British rulers were extremely reluctant—particularly after the 'Sepoy Mutiny'—to legislate for removal of social abuses. But some laws were passed affecting marriage and connected issues, e.g., the Civil Marriage Act of 1872, the Age of Consent Act of 1891, and the Sarda Act of 1929. A large section of the educated public supported such legislation, but there were leaders—such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak in the case of age of consent—who, though supporting social reform, were opposed to the interference of a foreign Government in religious matters.

On the whole, the social reform movement, judged by concrete results, was not conspicuously successful. But its impact was felt even in the villages, and although big evils were only marginally touched, many small evils disappeared.

Caste

The caste system, and the system of untouchability linked with it, were among the primary targets of the social reformers. In the nineteenth century stress was laid on the abolition—at least relaxation—of the caste system by the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, Swami Vivekananda and many other reformers. It was Gandhi who made the abolition of untouchability an important item in the 'constructive programme' of the Indian National Congress. He replaced the hated word 'untouchable' by the term 'Harijan'. The Constitution of India has made untouchability illegal and provided special privileges for the 'scheduled castes' including 'Harijans'.

The gradual disintegration of the caste system has been due to a large extent to factors other than the crusade of the social reformers. The British rulers introduced new economic forces which undermined the caste system in different ways. Industrialization and construction of railways created new opportunities for work outside the traditional scheme of occupational castes and made close contact between workers of different castes inevitable. The right to own property in land, including the right to sell land, as also the decay of the *panchayat* system, led to the disintegration of the traditional pattern of the rural society. The caste system was affected by certain legal changes. The educational system provided new opportunities for the 'depressed classes' and contributed to the removal of social inequality. In the urban areas there

developed a new social pattern in which caste played a role of diminishing importance. The struggle for freedom drew together men of different castes in strenuous common efforts. The 'depressed classes' organized themselves in associations for the recovery of social rights of which they had been deprived for centuries. Their greatest leader was B. R. Ambedkar. In 1947 he joined the Nehru Government and became the chief architect of Free India's Constitution.

Emancipation of women

The emancipation of women from century-old social constraints was another primary objective of the social reform movement. They were victims of denial of education, early marriage, polygamy, denial of the right to remarry after the death of their husbands, legal incapacity to inherit property, seclusion through the *pardah* system, etc. Official intervention in the form of legislation abolished *Sati*, permitted remarriage of Hindu widows (through the efforts of Iswar Chandra Vidya-sagar), recognized to a limited extent Hindu women's right to inherit property, fixed the minimum age for consent in 1891 (mainly through the efforts of the Parsi social reformer, Behramji M. Malabari), and fixed the minimum age for marriage in 1929 by the Sarda Act (sponsored by Har Bilas Sarda). Female education was promoted by the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, various progressive organizations and missionary societies. The Indian Women's University at Poona was started by D. K. Karve in 1916.

Advancement of education and spread of progressive ideas in the country accelerated the emancipation of women. They took an active part in the struggle for freedom. Sarojini Naidu became President of the Indian National Congress. The All-India Women's Conference was founded in 1927. After Independence the Hindu Code (1955) made monogamy mandatory for both men and women, permitted dissolution of marriage, and made daughters equal co-heirs with sons. But the social laws of the Muslims have been left untouched.

3. EDUCATION AND LITERATURE

Universities

Universities were founded in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay in 1857. The Punjab University was established in Lahore in 1882, and the Allahabad University in 1887. Some other Univer-

sities—those at Aligarh, Delhi, Agra, Patna, Dacca, Nagpur, etc.—were established in the present century. The early Universities were affiliating and examining bodies; teaching was provided by Colleges partially controlled by them. Sir Asutosh Mukherjee, a distinguished High Court Judge and Vice-Chancellor, introduced a new system in Calcutta University. He centralized post-graduate teaching in Arts and Sciences in the University and linked teaching with research. This bold innovation was given a formal shape in 1917. It gradually found acceptance in other Universities.

The increasing number of Universities, Colleges and English schools, as also of institutions for professional and technical education such as medical and engineering schools and Colleges, reflected the growing urge in the country for Western education. In 1901-2 more than 17,500 undergraduates were receiving higher education in 145 Arts Colleges, and there was a total enrolment of 5,400 students in 46 Colleges teaching law, medicine, engineering, etc.. From 1881-82 the number of pupils in secondary schools increased by 180 per cent, and that in primary schools by 49 per cent. Yet there was staggering illiteracy in the country. In 1901 only 98 persons per 1,000 in the case of males and 7 per 1,000 in the case of females were able to read and write.

Hunter Commission (1882)

In 1882 Ripon appointed a Commission, with Sir W. W. Hunter as President, 'to enquire particularly into the manner in which effect had been given to the principles of the Despatch of 1854 (from the President of the Board of Control, Sir Charles Wood), and to suggest such measures as might seem desirable in order to further carrying out of the policy therein laid down'. Although the chief object of the Commission was to enquire into the state of elementary education and to suggest means for its extension and improvement, it collected much useful information about collegiate education. It recognized the importance of 'the maintenance and development of colleges and schools of the higher class'; but it recommended the gradual withdrawal of the Government from the direct management and financial support of institutions of higher education. These institutions should mostly be under private management, but the Government should provide ordinary financial aid and special grants. Most of its recommendations related to the improvement of secondary education. The Government of

India adopted the Commission's views and suggestions on nearly all points and formulated the main lines of its educational policy on this basis.

Curzon's educational policy

Although there was considerable quantitative expansion of education during the four decades following the foundation of the Universities, qualitative improvement was almost negligible. On the whole, education seemed to be moving in a wrong direction. This problem attracted Curzon's attention. He drew a very depressing picture of the state of education, not only at the primary and secondary stages, but also in the Colleges and Universities. Teaching was made subsidiary to examination. Degrees were sought for their commercial value. Mental and moral development was ignored. There was slavish imitation of the European model. The Senates and the Syndicates, the controlling bodies of the Universities, did not properly discharge their functions. The former had too many members whose interest was not academic. The latter became ineffective due to inadequacy of statutory powers. The disorganized educational system reminded the Viceroy of the days of Hebrew judges when there was no King in Israel.

In 1902 Curzon appointed a Universities Commission 'to inquire into the conditions and prospects of the Indian Universities, to report upon proposals which might improve their constitution and working, and to recommend such measures as might improve their constitution and working, and to suggest such measures as might tend to elevate the standard of University teaching and to promote the advancement of learning'. The Commission was presided over by Sir Thomas Raleigh, Law Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. Among its members were Syed Husain Bilgrami, Director of Public Instruction in the Hyderabad State, who later became a member of the Council of the Secretary of State, and Sir Gurudas Banerjee, a Judge of the Calcutta High Court and the first Indian Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University.

The Commission recommended the reorganization of the controlling bodies of the Universities (Senate, Syndicate, Faculties), the imposition of stringent conditions for the recognition of institutions affiliated to the Universities, changes in the courses of study and methods of examination, etc. Taken as a whole, the Commission's Report appeared to the public as a document aiming at complete subordination of the Universities to the

Government. A big public meeting in Calcutta recorded its emphatic protest against the recommendations. The Indian National Congress adopted a resolution (1902) stating that the recommendations, if implemented by the Government, would 'check the spread' of education and 'restrict its scope', and 'virtually destroy such limited independence as the Universities at present enjoy'.

Curzon ignored this opposition. The Indian Universities Act (1904) was passed, mainly on the basis of the Commission's recommendations. The constitution prescribed for the University bodies, as also the conditions laid down for the affiliation of Colleges, ensured full Government control. An important feature of the Act was the provision permitting the Universities to appoint teachers for the 'instruction of students', to 'equip and maintain laboratories and museums', etc. Taking advantage of this provision Sir Asutosh Mukherjee initiated a radical change in the character of the Calcutta University which in later years served as a model for other Universities.

Contemporary critics of the Act ignored some of the problems of which Curzon took a realistic view. Their apprehensions proved to be ill founded. The control vested by the Act in the Government was not used, in practice, for taking away the autonomy of the Universities or for restricting the progress of higher education. Competent Indian educationists utilized the provisions of the Act for extending and improving the work taken up by the Universities.

Muslim education

For several decades after the introduction of English education the Muslims looked upon it with aversion and continued to keep themselves confined to Arabic and Persian studies. The result was their backwardness in the sphere of education as compared with the Hindus. In the seventies of the nineteenth century the Government of India adopted the policy of encouraging English education among the Muslims. The Hunter Commission (1882) recommended special measures such as provision for special grants and scholarships, for the purpose of implementing this policy. The patronage of the Government, however, led to no appreciable progress. During the period 1858-93 only 546 Muslims obtained University degrees as against 15,081 Hindus.

Sir Syed Ahmad, whose interest in the rationalization of Islamic religious thought has been explained above, rendered

the greatest service to his community in the field of education. Though his own education was initially confined to Arabic and Persian, he realized as early as 1863 that 'English is the language to which we should devote our attention'. He boldly stated (1872): 'The old Mahammedan books and the tone of their writings do not teach the followers of Islam independence of thought, perspicuity and simplicity . . .'. Undeterred by the opposition of the orthodox Muslims, he pursued a gradually developing programme for popularisation of English education in his community.

The first practical step was to translate important English works into Urdu, the normal spoken language of the Muslims in North India. This task was taken up by the Scientific Society established by Sir Syed Ahmad at Ghazipur in 1864. Two years later was founded the Aligarh Institute, associated with the Society. It published a weekly paper, *The Aligarh Institute Gazette*, which contained news and views likely to popularise English education among the Muslims. Schools were established at Moradabad and Ghazipur.

After a visit to England in 1869-70 he founded a school at Aligarh in 1875. It was affiliated to the University of Calcutta for the Entrance Examination, and its first batch of four candidates appeared at that examination in 1877. It was upgraded into a college, called Aligarh Anglo-Muhammadan College, in 1877. Affiliated at first to the University of Calcutta and then to the University of Allahabad, it taught up to F.A. (First Arts) in 1878 and up to B.A. in 1881. According to the rules followed in those days, it also offered candidates for the M.A. examination. It enjoyed liberal patronage from the Government. Employment opportunities for Aligarh students were excellent.

In 1886 Sir Syed founded the Muhammadan Educational Congress which was later re-christened Muhammadan Educational Conference. It held twelve sessions between 1886 and 1898. Its primary object was to explain to the Muslims the necessity of English education. In 1898 it adopted a resolution approving the establishment of a Mahomedan University. The Aligarh College became the Aligarh Muslim University in 1920.

Literature

Although some of the regional languages had rich literatures during the pre-British period, contact with the West

through English education brought new forms and content to Indian literature. In Bengal, where this contact had its start, 'European methods of literary approach were eagerly adopted; an expressive prose style was established, and the drama, the novel, the short story and the essay were born'. Gradually similar developments took place in other regional languages.

The modernization of literature necessarily contributed to the modernization of social life—the emancipation of the mind from the fetters of the past. The old isolation of the different regions was gradually removed by the growing facilities of communication—specially the railways and the postal system, the development of a uniform system of administration and the use of English as the medium of instruction. Exchange of literary ideas and forms among different regions followed; outlook was widened and national unity was slowly but steadily promoted.

Bengal had no prose literature before the nineteenth century. The Fort William College was its nursery. It was developed by Rammohun Roy, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Akshay Kumar Dutta, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Rabindranath Tagore and many other gifted writers. Poetry was liberated from its medieval constraints on form and content by Iswar Chandra Gupta, Michael Madhusudan Dutta (who introduced the blank verse), Rangalal Banerjee, Hem Chandra Banerjee, Nabin Chandra Sen, Bihari Lal Chakravarti and Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore won the Nobel Prize in 1913 and Bengali literature found an honoured place in world literature. The drama and the novel, unknown in Bengali literature in pre-British times, attracted brilliant authors. Among the early dramatists were Dinabandhu Mitra, Michael Madhusudan Datta and Girish Chandra Ghosh. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the composer of *Vande Mataram*, 'opened the floodgate of novels'. Rabindranath Tagore made remarkable contributions not only to poetry, but also to novel, short story, drama and essay. All these writers drew inspiration, and borrowed literary forms and ideas, from English literature, but dedication to nationalism—the craving for freedom—permeated their writings.

Bharatendu Harish Chandra inaugurated the modern period in Hindi literature in the second half of the nineteenth century. The novel, the short story, the drama, as also new styles in poetry, began to flourish. Prem Chand, a master of

short story as also of novel, belonged to the early decades of the present century. Many Hindi writers were influenced by English and Bengali literatures.

Literature in Assam and Orissa took modern forms under the impact of English influence. Lakshminath Bezbarua was the greatest figure in modern Assamese literature. Radhanath Rath ushered in a new age in Oriya poetry. Madhusudan Rao wrote prose as well as poetry. In Gujarat Dayaram, Narmada Sankar Lal Shankar (who was a rebel against social orthodoxy), Govardhanram Madhavram Tripathi, and Narsing Rao were among the outstanding literary figures. Literary progress in Maharashtra was promoted by the expansion of English education following the foundation of the Bombay University (1857). Three forms of creative literature were cultivated: story, novel, poetry. Real lyric poetry—'the poetry of love, of nature, of society, of nationalism, and of mysticism'—developed in the closing years of the nineteenth century. Among the distinguished Marathi writers were Hari Narayan Apte (novelist), V. G. Kirtane and M. B. Chitale (dramatists), and Krishnaji Keshav Damle (poet).

'Under the treble impact of missionary activity, English education, and renascent Bengal, Tamil literature quickened into new life in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the opening decades of the present century'. Novels became popular. In drama there was 'conscious imitation of western models'. Nationalism led to a great outburst of Tamil poetry. Rajam Iyer, Suryanarayana Sastri and Subramania Bharati are memorable names in the history of Tamil literature. K. Viresalingam, influenced by English literature, is regarded as the founder of modern Telugu literature. He was a voluminous writer; so was Chilakamarti Lakshmi-narasimham who wrote dramas, novels, stories, essays and biographies. In Karnatak the development of literature in the second half of the nineteenth century was influenced by the missionaries as also by Bengali models. B. Venkatacharya translated some novels of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. In Kerala a new era in literature was marked by the development of prose, the rise of the novel and the introduction of romantic poetry. Among the notable literary figures were Kerala Varma, Chandu Menon, the Venmani Nambudiris (senior and junior) and A. R. Raja Raja Varma.

THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT (1858-1907)

1. PRE-CONGRESS PERIOD

Genesis of Nationalist Movement

The foundations of the nationalist movement were laid during the last three decades of the Company's rule by Raja Rammohun Roy and Derozio and his disciples. Political awakening had its birth in Bengal, and it made greater progress here than in the other two Presidencies, because Bengal accepted English education with much greater ardour than Madras and Bombay, and produced a stalwart like Raja Rammohun Roy who has been acclaimed as the 'Father of Modern India'. Close acquaintance with European literature and political thought, and keen interest in revolutionary political changes in Europe, led political leaders and educated classes in Bengal to constitutional agitation for political rights. Having no faith in armed rising, they dissociated themselves from the 'Sepoy Mutiny', and its failure demonstrated the utter ineffectiveness of the traditional Oriental method of overthrowing oppressive rulers.

Political activities before 1857 had four principal characteristics. First, these represented the 'politics of petition' which the Extremists derided in the early years of the twentieth century. It was based on the idea that the British people, committed to constitutional government in their own country, would gradually concede political rights to their Indian fellow-subjects. It failed to realize the true nature and purpose of British rule in this country. It did not dream of throwing out foreign rule; it sought removal of grievances and slow admission into partnership with the British masters. There was no radical change in this aspect of nationalist aspirations till Gandhi introduced the 'politics' of resistance.

Secondly, the 'new politicians', being 'impeccably constitutional', worked through lawful associations. They spoke and wrote in English. They submitted their demands to the rulers. Their voice could not reach—was hardly intended to reach—the illiterate masses. Their activities were concentrated at big urban centres. They spoke for a 'nation' which was not yet aware of its own existence. The events of 1857-58 empha-

sized the fundamental disunity of the country on which a superficial kind of unity—administrative unity—had been imposed by the foreign rulers. The 'rebels' in arms found no national leader; they devised neither a national strategy nor a national programme. The political associations, pursuing a different policy, aimed at organizing the English-educated classes into units pleading for a more or less common programme of political progress. The culmination of this trend was the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885.

Thirdly, English education, which provided the impetus for nationalist ideas, was distributed with great unevenness among the provinces of British India. 'The growth of the educated class was concentrated in the three coastal Presidencies where the impact of British rule had worked much longer and gone much deeper than in those up-country provinces which had been organised during the nineteenth century'. 'At all levels of undergraduate and graduate performance Bengal was ahead either of Madras or of Bombay'. The intensity of nationalist feelings and activities varied with the rate of progress of English education.

Fourthly, the Muslims kept themselves completely aloof from the nationalist ideas and activities sponsored by the English-educated Hindus. They could not reconcile themselves psychologically with their loss of political power and make adjustments with the new political system. Many of them shared the revivalist ideas of the Wahabis. They did not accept English education. They confined themselves to their traditional system of education in Arabic and Persian. The result was that the nationalist movement originated as a Hindu movement.

Racial cleavage

Before 1857 the superiority complex and racial arrogance of the Europeans in India found concrete expression in their day-to-day dealings with the 'natives', including English-educated gentlemen. The European indigo-planters of Bengal treated the 'native' indigo-cultivators unjustly and cruelly, but they were generally protected by unfair laws and racially prejudiced European Magistrates. All British subjects of European origin enjoyed special privileges in criminal trials and civil cases. Macaulay (during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Auckland) abolished them in civil cases; but Bethune (during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Dalhousie) tried and failed to

abolish them in criminal cases. Both of them, particularly Bethune, had to face serious opposition from the Europeans. The English-educated Indians supported Macaulay and Bethune; indeed, their organized protest against European opposition to Bethune's proposals for legal reform was a clear demonstration of Indian reaction against racial privileges.

The contrast between 'white and black' was sharpened by the events of 1857-58. The racial cleavage was widened in the post-'Mutiny' years by bitter memories on both sides. Apart from insult in course of official and personal relations with the Europeans, the Indians often suffered from denial of justice whenever they were involved in civil or criminal disputes with the 'whites'. As G.O. Trevelyan wrote in 1864: 'The testimony of a single one of our countrymen has more weight with the court than that of any number of Hindus, a circumstance which puts a terrible instrument of power into the hands of an unscrupulous and grasping Englishman'. This 'terrible instrument' was sometimes used with such effect that an Englishman killing an Indian often escaped with a mere fine.

In the early years of the nineteenth century the number of Englishmen in India was small, and the difficulties of the sea route *via* the Cape of Good Hope cut them off from 'Home' for long periods. This necessitated some social contact with the natives. In the second half of the century their number increased as a result of the expansion of the administrative machinery and the influx of merchants and industrialists. The opening of the Suez Canal reduced the distance between India and England; travel became comparatively easy. The Englishmen in India could now live in an exclusive society of their own and refresh themselves by going to England at frequent intervals. Dwarka Nath Mitra, a Judge of the Calcutta High Court (1867-74), whom Lord Northbrook regarded as one of the most brilliant men he had ever met—as a man who was not less clever than the distinguished British Prime Minister Gladstone—was not treated by some of his British fellow Judges as a social equal. The Englishman wrote in 1873: "There are few instances in history of such a complete and deep gulf separating the conquerors from the conquered as exists between us and the natives of India".

With the expansion of English education and the progress of political awakening Indian resentment against the racial arrogance of the Europeans became a political force. It stimu-

lated nationalism. In 1867 Dadabhai Naoroji warned the white rulers: 'The meanest worm, when trodden upon, dashes its head against your foot. Of all dangers, those that arise from outraging the feelings of a nation are the most to be dreaded, and the most disastrous in their results'. How the 'outraged feelings of a nation' could react against the assertion of racial supremacy was demonstrated in the controversy over the Ilbert Bill (1883).

'Divide and Rule'

After the 'Sepoy Mutiny' the British rulers adopted as a matter of policy the old Roman system of *divide et impera* ('divide and rule'). Though they were uniting India through a common and centralized system of administration, expansion of railways, and spread of English education, they stressed India's diversities for political purposes. In 1888 Lord Dufferin spoke of the Indian people's 'enormous number, their multifarious interests, and their tessellated nationalities'. This idea did not lose its appeal to the British mind till the last days of British rule in India. In 1942 Sir Stafford Cripps said: 'In the great subcontinent of India there is more than one people, there are many peoples and races as there are in the great subcontinent of Russia'. As a natural reaction against such statements the Indian political leaders stressed their country's unity. From its early years the Indian National Congress claimed that India was a nation.

The Wahabi movement and the 'Sepoy Mutiny' had created deep-rooted suspicions in the British mind about the loyalty of the Muslims. For a decade after 1858 the British rulers followed an anti-Muslim policy. A change of policy began during the Viceroyalty of Lord Mayo (1869-72). A new system of removing the discontent of the Muslims through conferment of special favours was adopted. Under the shadow of this policy Sir Syed Ahmad succeeded in drawing his co-religionists to the British side and in keeping them away from the Indian National Congress which was trying to forge national unity on the basis of a common political programme.

The British rulers ensured the loyalty of the Indian princes after the 'Sepoy Mutiny' by giving up the policy of annexation which had been followed in the days of the Company. 'Britain became not a foe of feudalism but its defender'—protector of autocratic rulers. Karl Marx wrote: 'The native princes are the greatest obstacles to Indian progress'

The princes were looked upon as a 'powerful native aristocracy' whose sympathies, hopes and aspirations were to be identified (as Lord Lytton said in 1876) with the interests of the British Crown. A barrier was raised between the people of British India, who were exposed to liberal ideas and progressive forces, and the people of 'Indian India'—the States—who remained submerged under medieval political and social systems.

Lord Lytton (1876-80)

Lord Lytton's viceroyalty made no mean contribution to the development of nationalism. Surendra Nath Banerjee says: 'The reactionary administration of Lord Lytton had aroused the public from its attitude of indifference and had given a stimulus to public life. In the evolution of political progress bad rulers are often a blessing in disguise. They help to stir a community into life, a result that years of agitation would perhaps have failed to achieve'.

Lytton's aggressive war in Afghanistan provoked nationalist agitation, primarily because its heavy cost added to the tax-payer's burden. It was looked upon as an imperialist war, not directly connected with India's interest.

A five per cent duty on manufactured cotton goods imported from England had been imposed for many years. This duty was abolished in 1879 in order to satisfy the British textile manufacturers. Lytton took this step in opposition to the opinion of the majority of the Members of his Executive Council. This was done under pressure from the Secretary of State; but his predecessor, Northbrook, had refused to submit to that pressure. Nationalist opinion interpreted this favour to British industry as proof of British policy of ruining the growing cotton industry of India.

Two measures passed by Lytton in 1878 created resentment in Indian political circles. The Arms Act, which imposed stringent restrictions on possession of arms by Indians, appeared to be a calculated attempt to emasculate the people. The Vernacular Press Act imposed restrictions on newspapers published in the regional languages with a view to muzzling them; the purpose was to prevent them from criticising the Government and promoting the newly awakened political consciousness.

The magnificent *Durbar* held at Delhi in 1877 to proclaim the assumption of the imperial title by the Queen synchro-

nized with a terrible famine. Money which should have been spent for saving lives was diverted to a magnificent show which served imperial interest.

In 1878 new regulations were introduced reducing the prescribed age limit for appearing at the Indian Civil Service examination in London from 21 years to 19. This seriously inconvenienced Indian youngmen who intended to appear at the examination. It was a well-calculated measure to deprive Indians of fair and equitable opportunity of competing for entry into the Indian Civil Service.

Lord Ripon (1880-84)

The appointment of Lord Ripon as Lord Lytton's successor 'represented a change of opinion in England and a change of policy towards India'. The Liberal Government under Gladstone's Prime Ministership differed basically from the policies of Disraeli's Conservative Government. Ripon was every inch a typical mid-Victorian Liberal; he 'may be described as Gladstone's agent in India as Lord Lytton was Disraeli's'.

Not being a flamboyant imperialist like Lytton, Ripon was far more interested in dull administrative reforms than in a 'spirited foreign policy'. He brought the war in Afghanistan to a satisfactory conclusion and forged friendly links with Kabul which stood the stress and strain of forty years. He reduced the salt tax. He abolished protective duties which served the interest of British industry. He repealed the Vernacular Press Act. A modest beginning was made in respect of factory legislation for the benefit of industrial workers. He appointed the Hunter Commission and encouraged the development of primary and secondary education. He created representative local bodies. His programme of rapid expansion of railways was rejected by the Secretary of State on financial grounds.

These measures, characteristic of paternal government, did not satisfy Ripon. He desired to proceed from paternalism to partnership. This was in conformity with Gladstone's idea of 'giving to India the benefits and blessings of free institutions'. In Lord Lytton's time the dominant view was that the British Government of India was 'founded, not on consent, but on conquest'. Lord Ripon desired to introduce the principle of 'consent'. He recognized the necessity of 'maintaining our military strength', but in his opinion 'policy as well as justice' required that India should be governed 'more and more by means of, and in accordance with, that growing public opinion

which is beginning to show itself throughout the country'.

According to Ripon, there were 'always two policies lying before the choice (of the Government) of India'. One was the policy of establishing a free press, of promoting education, of 'admitting Indians more and more largely to the public service in various forms', and of 'favouring the extension of self-government'. The other was the policy of 'hating the freedom of the press', of 'dreading the progress of education', and of 'watching with jealousy and alarm' every thing which tended to give Indians a larger share in the management of their own affairs. Lytton had chosen the latter policy; Ripon committed himself to the former.

In pursuing this new policy Ripon attached the greatest weight to 'the thoughts, the desires, and the aims of the intelligent and educated men of the country'. He stressed 'the necessity of making the educated natives the friends, instead of the enemies, of our rule'. Apart from current political needs, he wrote, 'it would always be an aim worthy of the English Government in India to train the people over whom it rules more and more as time goes on to take an intelligent share in the administration of their own affairs'. In order to implement this policy he extended considerably the system of local self-government introduced by Mayo and recommended introduction of an elected element in the Legislative Councils created by the Indian Councils Act of 1861. In his view the Legislative Councils, not being representative in character, had failed to establish any real contact between the Government and the people.

If Lytton promoted Indian nationalism by feeding the people's smouldering discontent, Ripon strengthened it by feeding their hopes and aspirations. He earned the confidence and respect of the nationalists. When Surendra Nath Banerjee founded a College in Calcutta he named it after the Liberal Viceroy.

Ilbert Bill (1883)

During Ripon's Viceroyalty a legislative measure provoked bitter racial controversy and had important political consequences. Under the existing law Indian Magistrates and Judges, who were members of the Indian Civil Service, could not try 'European British subjects' in criminal cases although their European counterparts had no such restriction on their jurisdiction. Sir Courtenay Ilbert, Law Member in the Viceroy's

Council, introduced a Bill in the Governor-General's Legislative Council to remove the Indian officers' disability in this respect. His purpose was to remove some practical difficulties in the administration of justice. He sought to reform the Criminal Procedure Code by removing 'every judicial disqualification based merely on race distinctions'. The European community took up an attitude of 'fierce opposition' on the plea that even the most highly educated Indian was not fit to try a European in a criminal case. Some Europeans even organized a conspiracy to kidnap Ripon and deport him to England because he had sponsored this Bill. The pressure of the European community was reinforced by the lukewarmness of the support extended to the Bill by the majority of Members of the Viceroy's Executive Council. The 'Home' Government recommended a compromise. Ripon had to amend the Bill; provision was made for giving the 'European British subjects' accused of criminal offences the right to claim trial by a jury of which no less than half the number must be Europeans or Americans.

The struggle of the Europeans to retain their special privilege on the ground of racial superiority widened the cleavage between 'black and white' which had been poisoning the political climate for half a century. The Indians became more fully conscious of the humiliation of living under foreign rule. They realized that national self-respect could be preserved only through the acquisition of meaningful political rights. They felt that political goals could be achieved—as the success of the European struggle over the Ilbert Bill proved—only through well-organized and united movements. Surendra Nath Banerjee, a top-ranking political leader of those days, says: 'The Ilbert Bill controversy helped to intensify the growing feeling of unity among the Indian people . . . It strengthened the forces that were speeding the Congress movement'.

Presidency Political Associations : Bengal

Three Presidency Associations were founded in the early fifties of the nineteenth century : the British Indian Association of Calcutta (1851), the Bombay Association (1852), the Madras Native Association (1853). It was natural that political agitation should begin in 'the Presidency capitals where the commerce and administration of the Company had first unsettled the traditional order' and English education had pro-

duced men who 'had learnt the language and the political idiom' of their rulers.

During the years following the 'Sepoy Mutiny' the British Indian Association was the most important political body in India. It had an all-India outlook and a comprehensive programme covering political, social and economic issues. Although predominantly an association of zamindars who alone had the leisure, resources and influence needed for political organization, it enjoyed wide public support and carried weight with the Government. Its organ, the *Hindoo Patriot*, was perhaps the most influential newspaper in the country.

The political strategy of the British Indian Association was simple : to submit memorials and petitions to the authorities in India, as also to Parliament, relating to legislative and administrative measures. These documents were characterized by very sober criticism of official policies and humble pleading for modest reforms. Prayers were occasionally reinforced by speeches at public meetings. The attention of the Association was concentrated on issues connected with land, and its views were shaped primarily to safeguard the interests of the zamindars. Its spokesman in the Governor-General's Legislative Council, Kristodas Pal, editor of the *Hindoo Patriot*, championed the cause of the zamindars in the debate on the Bengal Tenancy Bill (1883). It opposed the imposition of income-tax. It opposed the Factory Bill passed by Ripon. But it opposed Lytton's Arms Act and supported the Ilbert Bill.

Presidency Political Associations : Bombay

Next to Bengal, Bombay was the most politically conscious province in India ; but the Bombay Association showed signs of rapid decay in post-'Mutiny' years. It was revived in 1867. Although primarily interested in local issues, it submitted memorials on questions like recruitment to the Indian Civil Service and the participation of the Legislative Councils in financial matters. By 1879 its activities practically ceased.

A new political association, called the Bombay Presidency Association, was established in Bombay in January 1885. It was practically the mouthpiece of the Parsi, Gujarati and Muslim leaders of Bombay city who did not like to associate themselves with Marathi Brahmin leaders of the Poona Sarvajanic Sabha. It was guided by a 'triumvirate' : Pherozeshah Mehta, K. T. Telang and Badruddin Tyabji. It was quite active in its early years, but it was gradually overshadowed by the Indian National

Congress. Mehta and Tyabji became Presidents of the Congress; the former was one of its front-rank leaders for many years.

Poona had lost its political importance with the fall of the Peshwa in 1818, but not its appeal to Maratha emotion. While Bombay was the administrative capital, the centre of trade and commerce, and the seat of the only University in Western India, Poona remained the cultural and social centre of the Marathas. It is not surprising that Maratha patriotism and Brahminical influence should have ascendancy at the former capital of the Marathas. Sir Richard Temple, Governor of Bombay, wrote in 1879: '... never have I known in India a national and political ambition, so continuous, so enduring, so far-reaching, so utterly impossible for us to satisfy, than that of the Brahmins of Western India'.

The Deccan Association, founded at Poona in 1852, and the Poona Association, founded in 1867, did not show any sign of much activity. The Poona Sarvajanik Sabha was founded in 1870. Although the Brahmins had a predominant share of membership, there were Hindus of other castes as also Parsis, Muslims and Christians. Mahadev Gobind Ranade—scholar, educationist, jurist, religious and social reformer, economist, politician—provided for the Sabha a type of leadership which no other political association could claim.

The Sabha not only took a constructive interest in local questions—such as revival of indigenous arts and industries, condition of agricultural classes, famine relief, settlement of disputes by arbitration, etc.—but also stimulated political activity on general issues. In 1875 it submitted a petition to the House of Commons demanding India's direct representation in Parliament. In 1878 it started, under Ranade's guidance, a quarterly journal which became 'the intellectual guide of new India particularly on economic questions'. It had to discontinue its publication in 1897. By that time the Sabha, then under the leadership of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, had been crippled by the hostility of the Government.

Presidency Political Associations : Madras

The Madras Native Association had a premature death in 1862. No new political association showing any real sign of activity grew up during the next two decades. In the early eighties the need of a strong central organization, which could claim to speak on behalf of the entire Presidency, was seriously

felt. The result was the establishment of the Madras Mahajan Sabha. It was different from similar associations in other parts of the country in one respect: it tried to bring about an interchange of views between the Presidency town and the mufussil. In 1885 it had nearly 56 affiliated associations. It worked in close co-operation with the Indian National Congress.

East India Association

Even before 1858 it had been recognized that the battle for India's political rights should be fought not only in India but also in England. The preliminary work had been done by Raja Rammohun Roy and Dwarkanath Tagore. The India Reform Society was founded in London in 1853 by English 'friends of India' for the purpose of 'bringing public opinion to bear on the Imperial Parliament in the case of India'. The East India Association was founded in London in 1866 with a view to discussing the Indian question and influencing British public men to promote India's welfare. Among its organizers was Dadabhai Naoroji who served the national cause with unabated zeal for many decades, was thrice elected President of the Indian National Congress, and was acclaimed in later years as the 'Grand Old Man of India'. 'He was also India's first economic thinker. In his writings on economics he showed that the basic cause of India's poverty lay in the British exploitation of India and the drain of wealth'.

Several other associations to promote India's cause were founded in England during the seventies and eighties of the nineteenth century. Some public men in England—John Bright, Charles Bradlaugh, John Digby, Henry Fawcett—and three retired members of the Indian Civil Service—Allan Octavian Hume, William Wedderburn, Henry Cotton—kept Indian issues before the British public and Parliament for many years.

Indian Association (Calcutta)

The British Indian Association lost its appeal to the younger generation because its programme was conservative and its membership was confined to a narrow circle. A group of new leaders holding progressive views, led by Sisir Kumar Ghosh, founder-editor of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, established in 1875 a new association called the India League. But it was weakened by internal differences and replaced in 1876 by another political body called the Indian Association. Its principal sponsor was Surendra Nath Banerjee, and his chief associate was Ananda Mohan Bose. He was dismissed from the Indian

Civil Service for a minor technical error. He began his public career in 1875, attracted the attention of the student community of Calcutta by delivering stirring addresses on nationalist topics, and gradually established his reputation as a great orator. Under his editorship the *Bengalee* became a powerful nationalist newspaper and exercised considerable influence on public affairs for many years.

According to Banerjee, the Indian Association had the following objectives: (1) creation of a strong body of public opinion; (2) unification of the Indian races and peoples upon the basis of common political interests and aspirations; (3) promotion of friendly feelings between Hindus and Muslims; (4) inclusion of the masses in political movements. The Association was to be 'the centre of an all-India movement', and it was for that purpose that the name 'Indian Association' was chosen. Banerjee declared: 'the conception of a united India, derived from the inspiration of Mazzini (who had conceived the idea of a united Italy), or, at any rate, of bringing all India upon the same common political platform, had taken firm possession of the minds of the Indian leaders in Bengal'.

The idea of Indian unity was a natural development of the process initiated by the British Indian Association. But the 'promotion of friendly feelings' between Hindus and Muslims and the 'inclusion of the masses' in political movements were entirely new ideas. In practice the Association became a political organ of the Hindu middle class, and its birth marked the first stage in the transfer of political leadership to that class from the landholders who dominated the British Indian Association. The small Muslim section of the educated community got its own organization in 1877 when Syed Ameer Ali founded the National Mohammedan Association. Attempts were, however, made by the Indian Association to carry the new political ideas to the masses. Largely attended public meetings were held in several districts and speeches were delivered on subjects such as trial by jury, freedom of the press, reduction of salt tax, removal of inequality between Indians and Europeans, etc.

Consistently with its middle-class character, the Indian Association provided leadership for agitation on issues such as the age-limit for the Indian Civil Service examination, Lytton's Arms Act and Vernacular Press Act, and the regulation of import duties on British cotton textiles. On the Bengal Tenancy

Bill it favoured the cause of the tenants and organized popular demonstrations of thousands of peasants. It concerned itself with the grievances of the tea-garden labourers in Assam. It supported Ripon's policy on local self-government which, it hoped, would provide a base for 'representative government'. It organized counter-agitation against the attempt of the Europeans to kill the Ilbert Bill.

In 1877-78 Banerjee toured different parts of India in an effort to create an all-India public opinion on the Civil Service issue. The agitation was carried to England by Lal Mohan Ghosh, a delegate sent by the Indian Association. He declared that it was necessary to 'transform the tiny brook of a feeble public opinion, into the rushing torrent of a mighty national demonstration'.

National Conference

Despite its wide outlook, progressive programme and success in establishing branches in and outside Bengal, the Indian Association did not succeed in becoming an all-India body. The Ilbert Bill agitation taught the political leaders that 'in the political world success did not depend so much upon men as on organized efforts.' Such efforts could pave the way to 'united and concerted action' on a larger scale than the Indian Association could organize. In 1883, following Banerjee's imprisonment for two months on the charge of contempt of court, it was proposed to raise a National Fund, which would be placed under the control of an all-India body 'with a view to secure the political advancement of the country by means of a constitutional agitation in India and England, and by other legitimate means'. The urge for unity was not confined to Bengal. 'Throughout the sub-continent there were signs of preparation for action which would rise above the merely local level'.

These developments led to the meeting of the first National Conference in Calcutta in December 1883. It was sponsored by the Indian Association; the leading organizers were Surendra Nath Banerjee and Ananda Mohan Bose. Its purpose was 'to bring the national forces into a focus, and, if possible, to concentrate them upon some common object calculated to advance the public good'. Attended by more than 100 delegates from different provinces, it was the first assembly of educated Indians representing different parts of the country deliberating on public questions for three days. A foreign

observer described it as 'the first stage towards a National Parliament.'

In 1884, following the first National Conference, Surendra Nath Banerjee undertook a propaganda tour in Upper India. Towards the end of the year there were large demonstrations to mark Ripon's departure from India which showed 'a spirit of organisation which India had never known before'.

The second session of the National Conference, held in Calcutta in December 1885, was attended only by a few representatives from provinces other than Bengal. This was due to the fact that the first session of the Indian National Congress was held in Bombay at the same time. The organizers of the two assemblies worked 'independently, neither party knowing what the other was doing until on the eve of the sittings'. The National Conference passed some resolutions, but it never met again, for those who had assembled under its banner joined the Congress.

The foundation of the Congress not only brought the National Conference to an abrupt end; it weakened the Indian Association which henceforth became entirely provincial in outlook and programme.

2. INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

Allan Octavian Hume

The man who played the initial role in collecting provincial threads in the political sphere and weaving them into an all-India net was a British member of the Indian Civil Service named Allan Octavian Hume. Son of the radical British leader Joseph Hume, he inherited his father's political views and interested himself in early youth in European revolutionary associations. He joined the Company's Civil Service in 1849, served in the North-Western Provinces, became a Secretary to the Government of India in 1870, incurred Lytton's displeasure and suffered demotion in 1879, and retired in 1882. Instead of returning 'Home' like his fellow Civilians he settled at Simla. In 1883-84 the 'hermit of Simla' entered the Indian political stage.

Three factors explain Hume's post-retirement activities: lingering loyalty to radicalism; experience, acquired during official career, of the suffering of the people due to economic distress; the conviction, created by the events of 1857-58, that

'the whole grand apparatus' of the British Government might 'shrivel up in a single month' as a result of a violent explosion of the people's discontent.

'Safety valve'

Against such a dangerous explosion Hume sought to provide a 'safety valve'. As a high official he had access to 'very voluminous secret police reports which revealed the growth of popular discontent and the spreading of underground conspiratorial organization'. He was afraid that educated Indians might provide leadership to the discontented masses and organize a powerful rebellion against their foreign rulers. He wrote: 'A safety valve for the escape of great and growing forces . . . was urgently needed'. This purpose could be served by providing for the 'products' of Western education a 'constitutional channel' for their political activities.

'The years just before the foundation of the Congress were among the most dangerous since 1857'. The Wahabi movement, though suppressed, was not dead. Its influence infiltrated into tribal disturbances in the north-west and survived among the Faraizis in East Bengal. In the Punjab the programme of the Kuka movement included the restoration of the Sikh sovereignty. Moreover, in the Punjab the money-lender had won a 'crushing victory' over the peasantry by 1880 and there was widespread discontent. In Western India the 'Deccan Riots' of 1875, which affected the Poona and Ahmadnagar districts, were due to heavy assessment of land-revenue and exploitation of the peasantry by crafty money-lenders. In Maharashtra Wasudeo Balwant Phadke organized an armed rising of peasants in 1879. He committed dacoities, but a large section of the public ignored his methods and lauded his intentions. In Bengal the 'Pabna disturbances'—an agrarian movement—directed official attention to the grievances of the peasantry and led finally to the passing of the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885.

The Indian-owned newspapers were rapidly growing in number and influence. In the late seventies there were about 62 such papers in the Bombay Presidency, about 60 in the North-West Provinces, Oudh and the Central Provinces, about 38 in Bengal, and about 19 in Madras. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, edited by Sisir Kumar Ghosh, and the *Bengalee*, edited by Surendra Nath Banerjee, were powerful organs of public opinion. The press publicized the grievances of the people

and criticized official measures. A Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal wrote: 'A Government, whose position largely depends on the sort of moral force due to a belief in its unassailable power, can hardly afford to be constantly held up to the contempt of its subjects'. This idea led Lytton to pass the Vernacular Press Act (1878). Two immediate results of the Act were the conversion of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* into an English paper and the foundation of the *Hindu* in Madras (1878). Ripon repealed the Act (1882). Already the *Kesari*, a Maratha daily (which later acquired great importance under the editorship of Bal Gangadhar Tilak) and the *Mahratta*, an English weekly, had been founded at Poona (1881).

Hume and Dufferin

Hume's assessment of the growing threat to British rule in India was somewhat exaggerated, for there was neither any individual nor any organization capable of shaping discontent in different regions into a rebellion, and there was no chance of success against the reorganized British army. But he was one of those few Europeans in India 'who still retained their faith in collaboration with educated India'. Naturally he came into close contact with Ripon. He also met Lord Dufferin, Ripon's successor, for political talks, but the Viceroy regarded him as a former Government employee who 'was got rid of on account of his impracticability' and 'seemed to have got a bee in his bonnet'. There is a later story that Hume received from Dufferin the idea of organizing an annual conference of educated Indians for political discussions. There is no trustworthy evidence to show that the idea of founding the Indian National Congress was conceived by the Viceroy.

As a matter of fact, the idea of organizing an all-India political organization owes nothing to Hume or to Dufferin. It had been anticipated dimly by the founders of the British Indian Association. It was recognized openly by the founders of the Indian Association. When the Indian Association found that it could not function in practice at an all-India level it convened two National Conferences (1883, 1885), which were to some extent national in composition and fully national in outlook. The torch lighted by the Indian Association through two National Conferences was taken away by the Indian National Congress which henceforth claimed to be a 'mighty nationalizer'.

Foundation of Indian National Congress (1885)

In 1883 Hume addressed an open letter to the 'graduates of the Calcutta University' in connection with the Ilbert Bill. He wrote: 'What is needed is union, organization, and to secure these, an association is required, armed and organized with unusual care, having for its object to promote the mental, moral, social and political regeneration of the people of India'. In 1883-84 he established contact with different parts of India and founded the Indian National Union. In 1884 he visited Bombay and discussed with local leaders the idea of the formation of a central 'national association' to direct political activities on an all-India scale. Early in 1885 he visited Madras where the Theosophists had already decided to form political associations at different stations and a central association at the capital of each province. Then he came to Calcutta where he met several leaders; but he did not meet Surendra Nath Banerjee whose progressive views were disliked by the moderate leaders like W. C. Bonnerjea. On his way back to Simla he met Dufferin. Expecting—presumably—the Viceroy's acquiescence—if not support—he issued a confidential circular to the inner circle of his political collaborators, announcing that a 'Conference of the Indian National Union' would be held at Poona in December 1885 which would be composed of educated delegates from all parts of the three Presidencies. He spent the later months of the year (1885) in England where he established contact with some leading Liberals, apparently to attract their interest to his project.

The proposed conference—to which the name 'Indian National Congress' was given—was held in Bombay on 28 December 1885, Poona having been found unsuitable on account of the outbreak of cholera there. The President was W. C. Bonnerjea, a leading lawyer of Calcutta. Hume was present. Leading Indian newspapers immediately recognized its importance. The *Hindu* of Madras acclaimed the 'birth of national unity'.

Development of Congress

The first session of the Congress was attended by 72 delegates; the largest number (about 38) came from the Bombay Presidency, and Bengal sent only 3, Surendra Nath Banerjee and Ananda Mohan Bose not being among them. At the second session in Calcutta (1886)—in which Surendra Nath Banerjee and Ananda Mohan Bose played an important role—there were

434 delegates, at the third session in Madras (1887) there were 607, and at the fourth session at Allahabad there were 1248. 'In 1888 Dufferin ridiculed the leaders of the Congress as spokesmen of 'a microscopic minority'.

The nationalist leader, Bepin Chandra Pal, wrote later that 'the Congress was not a people's body from the very start (and) . . . had an aristocratic air from the very beginning'. This is correct. Among the delegates of the first four sessions, numbering 2,361, there were 866 lawyers, 170 journalists, 67 doctors, and 61 teachers. For many decades more than one-third of the delegates at every session of the Congress belonged to the legal profession. There was an 'entire absence of the old aristocracy' representing the landed interest; it was the new aristocracy of professional men with Western education which founded and led the Congress.

In its early years the Congress had no permanent organization. 'There were no paying members, no official other than a general secretary, no central office, and no funds'. Every year a session was held in a different city with a different President, and it was managed by a local Reception Committee with locally collected funds. Yet the Congress grew from strength to strength because it made itself the mouthpiece of national aspirations and attracted the support of thousands who did not attend its sessions. Among its Presidents during the first two decades were nationally respected leaders like W. C. Bonnerjea, Dadabhai Naoroji, Badruddin Tyabji, Pherozeshah Mehta, P. Ananda Charlu, Surendra Nath Banerjee, Ananda Mohan Bose, Ramesh Chandra Dutt and Gopal Krishna Gokhale. There were two Muslim Presidents (Tyabji and R. M. Sayani) and three European Presidents (George Yule, a merchant of Calcutta, and Sir William Wedderburn, a retired Civilian who wrote Hume's biography, and Sir Henry Cotton, a retired Civilian). Among other leaders of the Congress were Mahadev Gobind Ranade, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, 'Sisir Kumar Ghosh, G. Subramaniya Iyer, and C. Vijayaraghavachariar. The participation of women in the national movement was anticipated by the address delivered at the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1890 by Kadambini Ganguli, the first woman graduate of Calcutta University.

Attitude of British Government

From its very birth the Congress had to face opposition from the foreign rulers. Dufferin openly described the Con-

gress as the mouthpiece of a 'microscopic minority' and charged it with provoking excitement of hatred against British officials. Towards the end of 1887 a 'Special Branch' of the Police was created 'with the object of dealing with specially confidential political movements and meetings, excitement, wandering characters of a suspicious nature, public feeling, illicit trade in arms and ammunition, etc.'. Hume organized meetings, distributed leaflets and pamphlets, and appealed for funds to all classes of Indians. His agitational methods alarmed the bureaucracy, and there was a proposal to deport him from India. The organizers of the fourth session of the Congress at Allahabad (1888) were obstructed by the local officials, at the instance of the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Auckland Colvin, in their attempt to procure a suitable site in the city.

As the Congress adhered scrupulously to moderate and constitutional methods, the British Government did not launch any direct attack on it; but steps were taken to weaken it by indirect methods. In 1888 the Viceroy formally warned some Princely States not to support the Congress. Far more effective was the alienation of the Muslims from the Congress through the policy of 'divide and rule'. The Aligarh Movement owed much to British official encouragement and patronage. Its first great political success was the gift of separate electorate from Lord Minto in 1906. The British rulers were hopeful that the Congress would collapse. Curzon wrote to the Secretary of State in 1900: 'The Congress is tottering to its fall, and one of my great ambitions, while in India, is to assist it to a peaceful demise'.

Congress programme : constitutional reforms

The Congress claimed a share in the government of the country, not freedom from British rule. Loyalty to the British Crown was loudly and repeatedly declared. As President of the second session Dadabhai Naoroji described the Congress as 'another stone in the foundation' of the British Government, not 'a nursery for sedition and rebellion'. In his speech at the first session he had claimed 'Britain's best institutions' because Indians were British subjects. As President of the third session Badruddin Tyabji urged avoidance of the 'sin of illegal and anarchical proceedings' and advocated the method of demanding redress of grievances through 'unanimous' and 'temperate' presentation of 'views and wishes' to the Government. Progress was to be slow and gradual. George Yule, President of

the fourth session, said: 'We don't want the strong meat of full age, but we want to be weaned'. Presiding over the thirteenth session Sankaran Nair said: 'The only condition requisite for the fruition of our political aspirations is the continuance of the British rule'. Surendra Nath Banerjee, speaking as President in 1902, declared that the Congress had a 'divine mission': 'the unification of our peoples and the permanence of British rule in India'.

A new note was introduced by G. K. Gokhale as President in 1905. He defined the 'goal of the Congress' as the attainment 'in course of time (of) a form of government . . . similar to what exists in the self-governing colonies of the British Empire'. Dadabhai Naoroji, presiding for the third time in 1906, used the expression 'self-government or *Swaraj* like that of the United Kingdom.' The word *Swaraj*, used by B. G. Tilak in the nineties, was used from the Congress platform for the first time in 1906, and it became 'the war cry of India for the next forty years'.

The Congress pursued moderate aims through constitutional methods. It was anxious to rally all shades of political opinion under its banner. It was careful not to alienate the Government lest its activities should be suppressed. It had 'enough faith . . . in the stern sense of British justice', as D. E. Wacha said as President in 1901.

In concrete terms the Congress programme centred round the Legislative Councils. The Congress demanded expansion of their size, introduction of an elected element into their composition, and enlargement of their functions. The emphasis was on the introduction of representative institutions. The demands had some influence on the making of the Indian Councils Act of 1892. It was accepted by the Congress in a 'loyal spirit'; but its provisions, particularly the absence of any provision for direct election, were criticized.

The leaders of the early phase of the Congress were genuine patriots; they sincerely desired their country's progress along lines laid down by the political thought and the political experience of the West. But they were realists; they felt that a direct challenge to British rule was out of the question. In those days Britain was the mightiest imperial power in the world. A direct challenge—the 'Quit India' movement—failed in 1942 when Britain was passing through the greatest crisis in her history. The early leaders of the Congress believed that

slow, gradual and moderate pressure on the British Government would, sooner or later, bring to the people of India the substance of self-government. As revolution was not possible they concentrated on reform. They tried 'to build up a strong public opinion in India, to arouse the political consciousness and national spirit of the people, and to educate and unite them on political questions'. In this programme their success was considerable. They laid the basis of a national demand which became wider, more exacting and more aggressive during the Gandhian era. They did not appeal directly to the masses and organize them for direct action. The time was not yet ripe for democratizing the nationalist movement to that extent. It was still a movement of the educated classes, but its influence infiltrated slowly into the villages.

Congress programme : administrative reforms

Administration touched the people at all levels. Naturally the pre-'Mutiny' political leaders, from Rammohun Roy onwards, pleaded for administrative reforms. That tradition was continued by the Presidency Political Associations, the Indian Association, and the Congress.

The most important administrative reform demanded by the political leaders during the last three decades of the nineteenth century was appointment of Indians in the higher grades of administrative services. Special stress was laid on the Indian Civil Service; removal of special difficulties which handicapped Indian candidates—such as fixation of a low age-limit—was demanded, and introduction of simultaneous examinations in London and India was urged. The appointment of Europeans was economically and morally injurious for India. They were paid high salaries and pensions, and a considerable part of their income was spent in England. Morally, submission to their control compelled Indians to live in 'an atmosphere of inferiority' and crushed their 'administrative and military talents'.

The Congress pressed for separation of the Judiciary from the Executive because the combination of the functions of the thief-catcher (the Magistrate who controlled the police) with those of the thief-punisher (the Magistrate sitting as a criminal judge) was opposed to the principle of impartial administration of justice. The Congress opposed the curtailment of the powers of the juries.

The Congress programme in defence of civil rights includ-

ed resistance to all official attempts to curtail the freedom of speech and freedom of the press. In 1897 B. G. Tilak and several other leaders in Maharashtra were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment on the charge of spreading disaffection against the Government through their speeches and writings. At the same time the Natu brothers of Poona were deported without trial. These attacks on the civil liberties of the people provoked a country-wide protest.

Congress programme : economic reforms

It has been alleged that the Congress had 'no popular programme to rally the peasantry' although 'the poverty of India gave rise to some academic speculation inside Congress'. This is not correct. The nationalists blamed the British for the destruction of India's indigenous industries and proposed the rapid development of modern industries in the country. As concrete measures they suggested tariff protection and direct Government aid for Indian industries. Even before the Swadeshi Movement following the Partition of Bengal (1905) they encouraged the use of Indian goods and the boycott of British goods for promoting Indian industries. Foreign clothes were burnt at Poona in 1896.

For the benefit of the peasantry the nationalists demanded reduction of land-revenue, extension of irrigation and development of agricultural banks which would free them from the clutches of the money-lenders. They agitated for improvement of the condition of workers in the plantations. They demanded abolition of the salt tax. They protested against the heavy military expenditure of the Government of India and pleaded for its reduction. They urged consideration for the sufferings of Indian workers whom poverty compelled to migrate to foreign countries such as South Africa, Mauritius, the West Indies and British Guiana in search of employment. They carried on a continuous agitation for stoppage of drain of wealth from India to England. 'Under the British Indian despot', Dadabhai Naoroji said, the Indian's 'substance is drained away, unseen, peacefully and subtly—he starves in peace and perishes in peace'.

Congress programme : social welfare

The movement for social reform was an important issue in public life in the eighties, but the Congress kept itself aloof from it. Dadabhai Naoroji said in his Presidential address in 1886 that there were different 'customs and social arrangements'

in different provinces and among different communities, and the Congress, being a 'gathering of all classes', could not 'discuss the social reforms needed in each individual case'. Hume said in 1888: 'The Congress is National, and it deals only with those questions on which the entire nation is practically agreed'.

The exclusively political character of the Congress explains its indifference to social reforms which had previously engaged the attention of Indian political leaders. Its leaders came from different provinces, religious communities, and castes. They could stand on the same platform only on such issues as were of concern to all Indian communities, e.g., political and economic issues. They felt that insistence on social reforms would obstruct the development of a national political programme. Though they remained silent on social abuses, they had a modest social welfare programme. They laid a good deal of emphasis on the spread of primary education among the masses. They also demanded increasing facilities for technical and higher education. They believed that, through Legislatures with elected representatives of the people and invested with larger powers, it would be possible to ameliorate the condition of the masses and promote social reforms.

Congress programme : national unity

The Congress leaders laid great stress on its role as a 'mighty nationalizer'. Speaking as Congress President in 1891, P. Ananda Charlu said that the equivalent of the English term 'nation' was the Sanskrit word *praja* which meant the 'aggregate' of 'citizens of one country, subordinate to one power, subject to one supreme Legislature, taxed by one authority, influenced for weal or woe by one system of administration, urged by like impulses to secure like rights and to be relieved of like burdens'. He attached greater importance to 'one-ness of rule and same-ness of political experience' than to factors like racial origin, religion and language. In this sense the Congress was promoting a national spirit. Sir Henry Cotton, speaking as Congress President in 1904, said: 'The growth of an Indian nation is the great political revolution that is working before our eyes'. Many years later Surendra Nath Banerjee chose for his autobiography a significant title: *A Nation in Making*.

'Moderates' and 'Extremists'

The official historian of the Congress had drawn a list of 56 'unsatisfied demands till the year 1918'. Of these, as many

as 41 relate to resolutions adopted by the Congress during the period 1885-1905. It was a record of disappointment which could not but weaken confidence in the policy of petition-cum-persuasion; but the Fathers of the Congress remained firm in their belief in Britain's generosity and statesmanship. One section of Congressmen, however, became uneasy. Bepin Chandra Pal described Ripon, an idol of the Congress, as a 'baby-comforter' and complained: 'We had been brought up for too long a period upon political lollipops'. Curzon 'threw the 'baby-comforter' away. He waited for the 'peaceful demise' of the Congress, and challenged the nationalists by partitioning Bengal. The established leadership of the Congress was still unwilling to change its policy and strategy.

Dissent had been developing since the early nineties; the chief centres were Bengal, Maharashtra and the Punjab. In Bengal Aurobindo Ghosh published *New Lamps for Old* in 1893-94, criticizing the Congress leaders for 'playing with bubbles' like Legislative Councils and simultaneous Civil Service Examinations in London and India. Aswini Kumar Datta described the Congress as 'a three days' *tamasha*'. Sister Nivedita, a disciple of Vivekananda, imported revolutionary ardour into the Nationalist movement. In Maharashtra Bal Gangadhar Tilak captured control over the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha after a split with the group led by the old veterans, Mahadev Gobind Ranade and Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1895). He became an all-India political celebrity as a result of his imprisonment in 1897. He said that Indians could not 'achieve any success if we croak once a year like a frog'. Bepin Chandra Pal condemned the Congress as a 'begging institution' (1902). In the Punjab Lala Lajpat Rai wrote articles (1901-2) criticizing the aims and methods of the Congress. Political rights could not be won, he declared, by an organization which could not 'distinguish between *begging* rights and *claiming* them'. He asked the Congress to realize that 'sovereignty rests with the people, the State exists for them and rules in their name'.

On release from jail in 1898 Tilak found himself thwarted in the Congress session of 1899 and opposed in his own province by Pherozeshah Mehta and G. K. Gokhale. But he found admirers in Bengal such as Bepin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh. The Shivaji Festival sponsored by him to commemorate the achievements of the great Maratha hero was accepted in Bengal as a national celebration. Rabindranath Tagore

wrote a stirring poem on Shivaji, describing him as a great dreamer of Indian unity. Sir Valentine Chirol, a British writer, called Tilak 'the father of Indian Unrest'. His radicalism lay in his idea of activizing the masses. He tried to educate them to be active participants in the political struggle.

The older leaders of the Congress, firmly committed to constitutional methods, were 'apprehensive of the forces that the awakening of the masses might unleash'. The difference lay chiefly in method. The 'old party', which came to be known as the party of 'Moderates', 'believed in appealing to the British nation'. This belief was not shared by Tilak and his supporters, who came to be known as 'Extremists'. They believed in 'achieving the goal by our own efforts'. There was no necessity for arms; 'the whole of this administration' could be paralysed by the use of a 'political weapon, boycott'. Among other weapons favoured by different Extremist leaders were the establishment of *Swadeshi* industries, introduction of technical education, and revolutionary terrorism.

The polarization of differences within the Congress—between the 'Moderates' and the 'Extremists'—was accelerated by the Partition of Bengal (1905). The Congress at its open session in 1905, with G. K. Gokhale—a Moderate as President, recorded its 'emphatic protest' against Curzon's anti-national measure, but there was no unanimity in regard to direct resistance in the form of *Swadeshi* and Boycott. The cleavage became sharper in the next session of the Congress (1906). At the next session held at Surat (1907) under the Presidentship of another Moderate, Rashbehari Ghosh, a definite split occurred. In 1908 the 'Moderates' drew up a Constitution which practically excluded the 'Extremists' from membership of the Congress which was declared to be 'definitely committed only to the constitutional methods'.

3. 'HINDU REVIVALISM'

Discovery of India's past

In the late eighteenth century and during the first half of the nineteenth century several Englishmen distinguished themselves by discovering and interpreting India's past. The great pioneer was Sir William Jones, the founder of the Asiatic Society in Calcutta. The Sanskrit Colleges at Benares and Calcutta were founded under British patronage. Prinsep deci-

phered Asoka's inscriptions. In the educational controversy of Lord William Bentinck's days, in which the Anglicists won the day, an influential group of Englishmen—the Orientalists—championed the cause of traditional studies in Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian. The Archaeological Survey of India, led by British officers like Alexander Cunningham, discovered and preserved artistic monuments of ancient India. Curzon passed the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act. Some German scholars interested themselves in Sanskritic studies. Max Muller bestowed the highest praise on ancient Indian civilization and explained what India could teach the West.

The European exploration of India's ancient heritage had a direct impact on the educated Hindus of the nineteenth century. They became acquainted with the political and cultural achievements of their remote ancestors and felt that they could revive that glorious tradition. This was a counterblast to the general British propaganda that India's religious and social life was darkened by superstitions, that her civilization was much inferior to that of the West, and that Indians were unfit for self-government. A new self-confidence inspired the educated Indians; they turned to the past for inspiration to restore national glory in literature, philosophy, art and politics. This 'revivalism' was a powerful force behind the national movement. In some cases an exaggerated value was attached to past achievements, and impractical over-confidence was indulged in. But there was no intolerance in such worship of the past, no open or implied hostility to any other community. The Muslims also glorified their past, turning their attention primarily to Arabia and Persia and giving medieval India no more than a secondary place in the assessment of their heritage.

Threat from Christianity

The continuous efforts of the Christian missionaries to preach their creed and secure converts, which had seriously alarmed the Hindu society during the pre-'Mutiny' period, took a new form in later years. As the response from the educated Hindus at the urban centres was very unsatisfactory, they tried to carry the message of Jesus Christ to the illiterate masses in comparatively remote regions. They virtually left the Muslims to themselves; their crusade was directed against Hinduism which they regarded as tainted by idolatry. A section of the E 'ahmos, led by Keshab Chandra Sen, 'developed unmistakable tendencies towards the modern European or Christian ethics

and rationalism.' The Hindu society stood on the defensive ; it found a protective wall in its ancient heritage.

Hindu Mela

At this crisis Rajnarain Bose, a Brahmo and a product of Western education, proclaimed 'the superiority of Hindu religion and culture over European and Christian theology and civilization'. His lecture on this subject (1872) was preceded by the formulation of his ideas (1866) for the establishment of a 'Society for the Promotion of National Feeling among the Educated Natives of Bengal'. These ideas were taken up by Nabagopal Mitra, editor of the *National Paper* founded by Devendranath Tagore in 1865. He started an annual public gathering called *Hindu Mela* to promote national feeling, patriotism and self-help among the Hindus. It was held 14 times between 1867 and 1880. Nabagopal maintained that the basis of national unity of India was Hinduism. This really meant a protest against humiliating borrowing from the West, not a challenge to the Muslims who were—along with the Hindus—victims of subjection to foreign rulers. The importance of the *Hindu Mela* declined owing to the establishment of other associations more directly connected with the political-cum-national movement in Bengal.

Swami Dayananda

Swami Dayananda forged a link between Hinduism and political liberation. He fostered the national pride of his countrymen by declaring that from the days of Manu to those of the Pandavas, the Aryans were the paramount power throughout the world. He traced the republican form of government to the Vedas and the *Dharma Shastras*. His teachings have sometimes been interpreted as an attack on other religions and as a plea for 'a dominant pan-Hindu revivalist framework'.

Bankim Chandra

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee responded to the threat of Christianity by interpreting Hinduism in the light of modern philosophy and principles of criticism in his three works, *Dharmatattva*, an incomplete commentary on the *Gita*, and *Krishnacharitra*. He used the Sanskrit term *dharma* in a sense which was wider than that of the English word 'religion'; it covered, he held, 'man's relations to God and his relations to man, his spiritual life and his temporal life'. His view of 'religion' was influenced by 'the empirical, utilitarian and posi-

tivist philosophy of Bacon, Bentham, John Stuart Mill and Comte'.

From Bankim's point of view there could be no reconstruction of the political and social systems in isolation from 'religion'. His political views were largely influenced by John Stuart Mill's individualism. One of the first graduates of Calcutta University and a responsible Government official (Deputy Magistrate), he aspired for national regeneration in political, economic, cultural and social spheres. In his early writings in the seventies he upheld the cause of social justice and social transformation. He advocated the rights of the peasantry against those of the zamindars.

In 1882 was published Bankim's novel *Anandamath* which contained the great national song *Bande Mataram*. Through it he 'gave us the vision of our Mother'. Aurobindo wrote: 'It is not till the motherland reveals herself to the eyes of the mind as something more than a stretch of earth or a mass of individuals, it is not till she takes shape as a great Divine and Maternal Power in a form of beauty that can dominate the mind and seize the heart, that these petty fears and hopes vanish in the all-absorbing passion for our Mother and her service, and the patriotism that works miracles and saves doomed nations is born'.

The tone of the novel, the Hindu imagery used in the song, and Bankim's writings relating to the new interpretation of Hinduism have been used as evidence to prove that he was a protagonist of 'Hindu revivalism' in politics. A similar charge has been made against some other Bengali literary figures of the nineteenth century such as Nabin Chandra Sen and Hem Chandra Banerjee. The fact is that they ransacked the past in search of a key to national regeneration. None of them made a fetish of religious orthodoxy and tradition, nor did they think of political progress in terms of sectarian or communal interest. Their standpoint began to be misunderstood when the Muslim search for identity on the basis of their Islamic heritage became a practical factor in Indian politics.

Swami Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda was a *sannyasi* who had renounced worldly life; but he had good western education in his youth, and his conception of society was influenced by the views of Herbert Spencer and Comte. He was free from the customary socio-religious prejudices. Like Bankim, he took an integrated

view of life and religion. In other countries, he said, religion was 'one of the occupations of life' in addition to politics and 'enjoyments of social life'; but in India religion was 'one and the only occupation of life'.

Vivekananda raised patriotism to a high spiritual level. His Neo-Vedantism 'spiritualized the concrete contents and actual relations of life'; it did not confine itself to the cultivation of knowledge and meditation. 'A spiritual upheaval', he wrote, 'is almost always succeeded by political unity'. He did not write any political treatise. He never gave any direct political message. Yet he contributed to a 'spiritual upheaval' which had a direct impact on politics. He forged a link between religion, social service and patriotism. He was a source of inspiration for the early militant nationalists. He was really 'the unconscious prophet of the new Indian nationalism, whose ideology shows the impress of his doctrines'.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak

One characteristic feature of the 'Extremist' ideology inside the Congress was its identification of nationalism with what Tilak called the 'feeling of *Hindutva*'. This 'Extremist' leader wrote: 'The Hindus of the Punjab, Maharashtra, Telengana and Dravida are one and the reason for this is only Hindu *dharma*'. Again: 'We have lost our glory, our independence, everything. Religion is the only treasure we have; if we forsake it, we shall be like the foolish cock in Aesop's fables that threw away a jewel'. In social matters he upheld the orthodox point of view, supporting existing practices on the authority of the Hindu scriptures. On the issue of the Age of Consent Bill 'he offered a straight, even virulent defence of the existing practices relating to child marriage among the Hindus'. At the same time he opposed the foreign Government's interference with Hindu social customs.

He used 'revivalism' for the political purpose of 'awakening the different sections of the people' and strengthening their self-confidence by convincing them that they had a sound socio-religious heritage. But he was not a communalist; his stress on *Hindutva* was not a crusade against Islam as a religion or the Muslims as a section of the Indian population. He understood the need for Hindu-Muslim unity and made a major contribution to the Lucknow Pact (1916) which forged temporary unity between the two communities.

Lajpat Rai

Another leading 'Extremist', Lala Lajpat Rai, was inspired by the principles and teachings of the Arya Samaj. He said that the Arya Samaj had taught him 'to love the Vedic religion, to be proud of Aryan greatness, and to make sacrifices for the country'. His religious faith urged him to 'unfasten the chains of intellectual, moral, religious and social bondage'. In the context of the circumstances of his age this struggle inevitably assumed the form of militant protest against foreign rule. He was 'wedded to the idea of Hindu nationality'; but, as in the case of Tilak, his conception of 'Hindu nationality' did not imply hostility to the Muslims.

Aurobindo

Aurobindo Ghosh, who lived in England in his early years and was educated there, drew inspiration from European revolutionary thought till the beginning of the present century. But in 1905 he wrote *Bhavani Mandir* in which 'the Mother is manifested as the Mother of Strength'. Our mother-country, he wrote, 'is not a piece of earth, not a figure of speech, nor a fiction of mind. It is a mighty *Sakti* composed of the *Saktis* of all the millions of units that make up the nation'. The *Saktis* were regarded as being divided into two categories, *Arya* and *mlechchha* (foreign). On the whole, the conception was metaphysical rather than practical. It was probably connected with the imagery of Bankim's *Bande Mataram* and the historical appeal of Tilak's Shivaji Festival. The British bureaucracy, however, gave it a practical interpretation. In its view, 'by encouraging nationalism in a religious direction men like Aurobindo were exploiting the religious sentiments of many Hindus but alienating the Muslims.'

Bepin Chandra Pal

Bepin Chandra Pal, a full-fledged Brahmo who later imbibed Vaishnava influence, belonged at first to the 'Extremist' group of Congress leaders. He admitted the importance of Hinduism as the 'original stock and staple' of nationality, but he did not give it a purely Hindu complexion. He developed the idea of 'composite patriotism' to reflect the political urges of different races, cultures and creeds constituting the population of India. He recognized the separate identity of non-Hindu units. At the same time he acclaimed Shivaji as 'the symbol of a great idea . . . the idea of a *Hindu Rashtra*

which would unite, under one political bond, the whole of the Hindu people, united already by traditions and scriptures'

'Moderates': loyalty to English ideas

The 'Moderate' leaders of the Congress did not look back to their country's past. Instead of being inspired by India's ancient heritage they derived political inspiration and guidelines for political action from the history, philosophy and literature of the ruling race. Sankaran Nair, speaking as Congress President in 1897, observed: 'From our earliest school days the greatest English writers have been our classics ... English history is taught us in our schools ... week after week English newspapers, journals and magazines pour into India. We in fact now live the life of the English'.

Surendra Nath Banerjee studied the history of the national movements in Europe and was particularly impressed by the 'Young Italy' movement led by Mazzini. But he said as Congress President in 1895: 'England is our political guide and our moral preceptor ... English history has taught us those principles of freedom which we cherish with our life-blood We have been taught to admire the eloquence and genius of the great masters of English political philosophy'.

4. MILITANT NATIONALISM

Beginnings

Even before the birth of the Congress there were indications that certain European influences were bringing to India's infant nationalism a trend towards militancy. As early as the seventies some young men formed secret societies in Calcutta on the model of the *Carbonari* of Italy. This was due to the impression created by Surendra Nath Banerjee's lectures on Mazzini and the Italian freedom movement, and he was connected with some of these societies. But these made no impact on the political situation.

Maharashtra

In Maharashtra militant nationalism was initiated by Wasudeo Balvant Phadke in the seventies. But he 'committed no overt act of any kind directly against the Government'; instead of organizing a secret society of educated youngmen to shoot down Government officials, he used tribal youths to raid villages and punish money-lenders who exploited the poor peo-

ple. He led what was really an agrarian movement; its background was the devastating Deccan famine of 1876-77.

«Towards the close of the nineteenth century the Ganapati and Shivaji Festivals, both initiated by Tilak in the early nineties, aroused a new militant spirit. Speaking on Shivaji in 1897 and referring to the murder of Afzal Khan he declared: 'If thieves enter our house and we have no strength to drive them out, should we not without hesitation shut them in and burn them alive?' The reference to the English 'thieves' was clear enough. He was prosecuted and imprisoned for sedition.

In the same year a tense situation was created at Poona by official measures connected with an outbreak of plague. Two brothers, Damodar Hari Chapekar and Balkrishna Hari Chapekar, murdered two British officers. They were hanged. Probably they 'had no definite political aim'. They did not try to build up any organization.

It was Vinayak Damodar Savarkar who really made militant nationalism a political force in Maharashtra. In 1900 he started an association called *Mitra Mela* (Friends' Assembly). Four years later it was named *Abhinava Bharata* (New India) on the model of 'Young Italy'. Its aim was to secure the country's independence—if necessary, by armed revolt. Its programme included the purchase and storage of weapons in neighbouring countries, the opening of secret factories for the manufacture of weapons, and the secret import of weapons from other countries in merchant ships. Secret Societies were established in different parts of Maharashtra—Nasik, Bombay, Poona, Kolhapur, Aundh, Satara—as also in places like Gwalior, Baroda, Amraoti, Yeotmal and Nagpur. There was, however, no single party or organization controlling these societies; Savarkar's group formed a very weak link between scattered revolutionaries.

In a book surcharged with passionate patriotism Savarkar described the 'Sepoy Mutiny' as India's first 'War of Independence.' Apparently a fresh war was to be fought on the same lines.

Bengal

In Bengal the ideological background for militant nationalism was provided by two novels of Bankim Chandra (*Anandamath* and *Debi Chaudhurani*) and his *Dharmatattva* (which stressed the all-round cultivation or *anushilan* of all human faculties—physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual) as also

by Swami Vivekananda's stirring call : 'Arise, Awake'. The patriotic *sannyasis* of *Anandamath*, as portrayed by Bankim, were prepared to sacrifice themselves at the altar of the Motherland. The leading characters of *Debi Chaudhurani*, Bhabani Pathak and Prafulla, were ardent pursuers of *anushilan dharma*. A *sannyasi* and a Vedantist, Vivekananda did not preach political revolution. But he told another leading disciple of Ramakrishna : 'Even a cow tied to a rope makes all kinds of efforts to get free'. He wrote: 'Forget not that thou art born as a sacrifice to the Mother's altar'. In his writings ardent young souls found the call of a higher life based on the message of the Vedanta. One of his closest disciples, Sister Nivedita (an Irish lady named Margaret Noble, with Sinn Fein connections) was actively associated with militant nationalism. She infected Bengal's youth with revolutionary fervour through her works *Religion and Dharma* and *Kali the Mother*. Inspiration was drawn from the *Gita* which stressed the duty of fighting for the right cause and preached the immortality of the soul,

Militant nationalism took an organized form at the beginning of the present century. In 1902 a secret society named *Anushilan Samiti*, which probably borrowed its name from Bankim, was established with Pramatha Nath Mitra, a Barrister-at-law, as President. Chitta Ranjan Das, another Barrister-at-law and later leader of the Swarajya Party and President of the Congress, and Aurobindo Ghosh, then Principal of the Gaikwar's College at Baroda, were Vice-Presidents. Another revolutionary group was organized by Sarala Debi Chaudhurani, who was related to Rabindranath Tagore's family and whose husband was a Punjabi. She was the bridge between the thought currents on militant nationalism in Maharashtra and Bengal on the one hand, and in Bengal and the Punjab on the other. In the Punjab Lajpat Rai was, in the words of a British-managed paper, 'a rebel busily immersed in the affairs of his insurrectionary enterprise with a thousand desperadoes at his command'.

The *Anushilan Samiti* was very active ; at one time it had about 500 branches. It prepared the ground, in thought as also in action, for achieving independence through the use of arms. Militant nationalism gained a powerful impetus from the Partition of Bengal (1905). A new group of revolutionaries was organized by Barindra Kumar Ghosh, younger brother of Aurobindo Ghosh, in 1906. It came to be known as the

Jugantar party because it published a periodical called *Jugantar* which openly advocated armed revolt. Aurobindo Ghosh came to Calcutta from Baroda and became editor of the newly started English journal *Bande Mataram*. Another journal inspiring and supporting revolution was the *Sandhya*, edited by Brahmbandhab Upadhyaya.

In their attempt to practise what they preached, the revolutionaries manufactured bombs, committed murders, and collected money through dacoity. More than 40 persons were arrested and put up for trial in what came to be known as the Alipore Conspiracy Case (1908). Barindra Kumar Ghosh and some of his leading associates received heavy punishment; but Aurobindo, one of the accused, was released, thanks to the powerful advocacy of Chitta Ranjan Das. Before long Aurobindo gave up active politics and started his *ashram* at Pondichery for the spiritual uplift of humanity. By that time, however, the cult of the bomb had become associated with martyrdom for the liberation of the country.

Conclusion

Militant nationalism was a revolutionary movement with a definite political goal: complete independence for India. Here lay its fundamental difference with the Congress which did not think of complete independence till 1929. The weapons of the militant nationalists—murder of Government officers, dacoity for collection of funds, attempts to collect arms—differed from those of the Congress. For this they are sometimes called 'terrorists'; but their 'terrorism' was directed against the servants and agents of the foreign Government.

They were weakened by factional quarrels among different groups and leaders, as also by lack of plans. Aurobindo wrote in 1908: 'The Mother asks us for no schemes, no plans, no methods. She herself will provide the schemes, the plans, the methods'. A vast country ruled by a mighty imperial power could not be liberated by the unplanned efforts and sacrifices of individuals. Such sacrifices attracted popular sympathy and admiration; but the militant nationalists had to work in secret, and they could not organize any mass movement.

Hindu religious and philosophical thought provided inspiration for militant nationalism. This, it is said, kept the Muslims aloof or hostile. But, apart from small sections, the Muslims did not accept even the peaceful and constitutional

methods of the 'Moderate' leaders of the Congress who drew their inspiration from English political ideas.

5. PARTITION OF BENGAL

Lord Curzon (1899-1905)

'Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty marked the apogee of the imperial system which had been built up by Lord Dalhousie and his post-Mutiny successors'. He was undoubtedly one of the greatest—if not the greatest—of the pro-consuls sent by England to govern her Indian Empire. He was the youngest of the Governors-General, except Dalhousie, and he resembled Dalhousie as an administrator of superabundant energy and industry. He came to India as 'the rising hope of the imperialist wing of the Conservative party'. He had travelled widely and acquired first-hand experience about Asiatic countries. He had visited India four times before his assumption of the Viceregal office. He was convinced that Providence had placed India in charge of Britain and the Englishman's task was 'to fight for the right, to abhor the imperfect, the unjust, and the mean'. He got a second term of office, but he resigned long before the completion of this term because the 'Home' Government supported the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Kitchener, against him in a controversy relating to the administration of the Army. After his departure from India he played a distinguished role in the political life of England. But he missed the Premiership, the *summum bonum* of his political ambition.

Immediately after Curzon's departure G. K. Gokhale, presiding over the Congress (1905), offered a critical assessment of his administration. He compared it with the administration of Aurangzib. In both cases Gokhale found 'the same attempt at a rule excessively centralized and intensely personal, the same strenuous purpose, the same overpowering consciousness of duty, the same marvellous capacity for work, the same sense of loneliness, the same persistence in a policy of distrust and repression, resulting in bitter exasperation all around'. He praised Curzon's 'wonderful intellectual gifts, his brilliant powers of expression, his phenomenal energy, his boundless enthusiasm for work'. But his greatest defect was lack of 'a sympathetic imagination, without which no man can ever understand an alien people'. 'To the end of his administration Lord Curzon did not really understand the people of

India'. He looked upon India as 'a country where the Englishman was to monopolise for all time all power and talk all the while of duty'. 'In his scheme of things there was no room for the educated classes of the country'. He 'trampled more systematically' upon the opinions of these classes 'than any of his predecessors and claimed for his own judgment and that of his official colleagues a virtual character of infallibility'. He believed that 'the Indian's only business was to be governed and it was a sacrilege on his part to have any other aspiration'. In this respect his policy was reflected in the Calcutta Municipal Act (1899) and the Indian Universities Act (1904).

Partition of Bengal : early projects

The Partition of Bengal (1905), which was the climacteric of Curzon's administration and the most crucial example of his contempt for educated public opinion, provided the occasion for the first great political movement of the present century. Officially treated as a measure for improvement of administration in the vast territories in charge of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, it became a big political issue and stirred the forces of nationalism.

Curzon was quite right in saying that Bengal was 'too large for one man', i.e., a Lieutenant-Governor unaided by an Executive Council. The Madras and Bombay Presidencies were smaller in size and less populous, and in some respects their administrative problems were less complex than those of Bengal. Yet each of them had a Governor aided by an Executive Council.

This problem was noted by the Government of India and the Secretary of State as early as 1868. The first step towards the partition of Bengal was the separation of Assam which was placed under a Chief Commissioner in 1874. The new province included the Bengali-speaking district of Sylhet as also the district of Goalpara which had been cut off from the Bengal district of Rangpur before the British conquest of Assam.

It was not long before the question of giving further relief to the 'overweighted' Government of Bengal through transfer of a part of its territories was raised in connection with disturbances in the Lushai Hills adjoining the Chittagong district in Bengal. Projects of transferring to Assam the district of Chittagong, or the whole of the Chittagong Division (comprising the districts of Chittagong, Noakhali and Tipperah), were considered during the years 1892-96, but decision was held over

till the completion of the Assam-Bengal Railway which was planned to connect Assam with the Chittagong Division. When these projects leaked out the public in Bengal became perturbed and protested.

If Bengal was administratively unmanageable because of its size, the administration of Assam suffered, partly because the province had no separate cadre of officers in the Indian Civil Service. Officers in the Bengal cadre served in Assam for brief periods. This caused dissatisfaction among the officers and interfered with the smooth running of administration in Assam. The province could not have a separate cadre until and unless it had larger territories requiring a larger number of high officials. It appears from Surendra Nath Banerjee's *A Nation in Making* that this was an important argument—from the official point of view—in favour of transfer of some Bengal districts to Assam.

To the interests of the Indian Civil Service were added those of the British tea-planters of Assam who wanted a port nearer than Calcutta so as to reduce their freight-charges on exported tea. This port would be Chittagong. Its development would be expedited, and it would no longer be side-tracked in favour of the Calcutta port, if it was placed under the control of the Government of Assam. For this purpose it was necessary to transfer the whole of the Chittagong Division to Assam. The control of the Assam Bengal Railway, which connected Assam with the Chittagong Division, was an important issue.

Curzon's policy

This was the position when Curzon took charge as Viceroy (1899). The proposal of transferring some Bengal districts to Assam had been under active consideration for several years; he did not initiate it. The issue was complicated by a new development in the west. In 1902 Sir Andrew Fraser, Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, suggested that Orissa should be transferred from Bengal to the Central Provinces. Oriya had been substituted for Hindi as court language in the district of Sambalpur (in the Central Provinces). Fraser thought it would be inconvenient to have a single Oriya-speaking district in the Central Provinces which was a Hindi-speaking province, and it would be better to include all Oriya-speaking districts in that province. Meanwhile, Berar had been leased in perpetuity to the British Government by the Nizam and it

was attached for administrative purposes to the Central Provinces, adding considerably to the latter's extent.

Before the question of transfer of Orissa to the Central Provinces could be examined, Sir Andrew Fraser assumed charge as Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal (November 1903). He had already expressed the opinion that not only the Chittagong Division but also two districts of the Dacca Division—Dacca and Mymensingh—should be transferred to Assam. Curzon took up the idea. He stated his views officially in May-June 1903. He described the boundaries of Bengal, Assam, the Central Provinces and Madras (which included some Oriya-speaking areas) as 'antiquated, illogical, productive of inefficiency'. He decided to 'fix the administrative boundaries of India for a generation'.

On the basis of the Viceroy's views Herbert Risley, Home Secretary to the Government of India, wrote his historic letter of 3 December 1903 and addressed it to the Governments of Bengal, Assam, the Central Provinces, and Madras. It contained a scheme of 'comprehensive territorial redistribution'. The Oriya-speaking people scattered in three provinces (Bengal, Madras, the Central Provinces) would be united under one Administration, i.e., Bengal. Assam was to be 'erected into a vigorous and self-contained Administration, capable of playing the same part in the north-eastern frontier of India that the Central Provinces have done in the centre, and that the Punjab formerly did in the north-west'. For this purpose Assam was to be enlarged by the addition of the Chittagong Division (along with the State of Tripura or Hill Tipperah) as also of the Dacca and Mymensingh districts of the Dacca Division. Subsequently the scope of the scheme was extended so as to include the transfer to Assam of the two other districts in the Dacca Division (Bakharganj and Faridpur) as also the districts of Rajshahi, Malda, Dinajpur, Bogra and Jalpaiguri (along with the State of Cooch Behar) in North Bengal. This arrangement was intended to bring all Muslim-majority districts in Bengal in the new province of 'Eastern Bengal and Assam', which would have its capital at Dacca. It would have an area of 106,540 square miles and a population of 31 millions (Muslims numbering 18 millions). The new province of 'Bengal' would comprise Calcutta and eleven districts in West Bengal, the district of Darjeeling in North Bengal, as also the whole of Bihar and Orissa (including Sambalpur and the Oriya-speak-

ing States). Its area would be 141,580 square miles with a population of 54 millions (Hindus numbering 42 millions).

The Secretary of State sanctioned the scheme in June 1905. It came into effect on 16 October 1905. 'Eastern Bengal and Assam' was placed under a Lieutenant-Governor without an Executive Council, but it was given a Legislative Council. 'Bengal', with its capital at Calcutta, continued to be administered by a Lieutenant-Governor. It had a Legislative Council, and it got an Executive Council a few years later.

The publication of the Risley letter in the *India Gazette* 'gave rise to an immense amount of public discussion' which soon took the shape of a 'sustained and systematic opposition' throughout Bengal. It was evident that the Bengali Hindus would not only be a minority in 'Eastern Bengal and Assam' but also in the reconstituted province of 'Bengal' in which they would be outnumbered by the Hindi-speaking and Oriya-speaking peoples. Moreover, the provincial barrier would affect the social and cultural solidarity of the Bengali-speaking people. Public opinion in Assam was generally not in favour of the proposed reconstitution of the province. It was argued that the Bengal system of administration was 'too legalized' and sophisticated for such a 'backward province as Assam'. It was apprehended that Assam would get less attention from a Government with its seat at Dacca than it got from the Chief Commissioner stationed at Shillong.

Curzon ignored these weighty objections, nor did he consider alternative proposals such as the replacement of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal by a Governor with an Executive Council, or the creation of Bihar as a separate province, which would provide substantial relief for the over-burdened Government of Bengal. As the opposition was spear-headed by the Hindus, he tried to win over the support of the Muslims. He told them that in the new province of 'Eastern Bengal and Assam' they would have a 'preponderating voice' and acquire 'a unity which they have not enjoyed since the days of the old Musalman viceroys and Kings'. He secured the support of Nawab Salimulla of Dacca, the leading Muslim zamindar of East Bengal, by promising him a large Government loan on extremely favourable terms.

The scheme of partition was, according to Surendra Nath Banerjee who led the opposition, 'conceived in secret, discussed in secret, and settled in secret'. There was no formal or infor-

mal consultation with the non official members of the Bengal Legislative Council. The legislation to give effect to it was 'carried through at Simla at a hole and corner meeting of Curzon and the official members of the Governor-General's Legislative Council at which not a single Indian member was present'. Parliament was informed after the approval of the scheme by the Secretary of State, and even then full facts were not placed before it.

Behind the scheme, which was officially represented as an administrative measure, lay a political purpose which Curzon explained to his superiors in London. He wanted 'to split up and thereby to weaken a solid body of opponents' to British rule. 'Bengal united was a power', that power was to be broken by partition. 'Calcutta is the centre', Curzon wrote, 'from which the Congress party is manipulated throughout the whole of Bengal and, indeed, the whole of India'. Therefore, Calcutta was to be 'dethroned from its place as the centre of successful intrigue' and the path was to be cleared for the growth of 'independent centres of activity and influence' such as Dacca. A cleavage would develop between the Hindus, who were looked upon as a 'solid body of opponents' to British rule, and the Muslims, won over by the offer of a 'preponderating voice' in 'Eastern Bengal and Assam'. 'The Hindu West was neatly balanced by the Muslim East'.

The policy of rallying the Muslims against the Hindus was steadily pursued by the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam during the years following the Partition (1905-12). Sir Bampfylde Fuller, the first Lieutenant-Governor of the new province, described the Muslims as his 'favourite wife'. The Partition of 1905 foreshadowed the Partition of 1947.

Swadeshi Movement

Surendra Nath Banerjee warned the Government that the country would not 'acquiesce in this monstrous proceeding without a strenuous and persistent struggle'. Curzon and the bureaucrats failed to realise the strength of the solidarity which characterized the Bengali Hindus. Their mistake was proved by the *Swadeshi* Movement. Those who believed in constitutional methods carried on the struggle through continuous agitation and boycott of British goods. Different sections of the population—zamindars, lawyers, merchants, students, the poor people in towns and villages, even women—came forward spontaneously to oppose the partition of their province. Leader-

ship was provided by 'Moderates' like Surendra Nath Banerjee, Krishna Kumar Mitra and Aswini Kumar Datta. Rabindranath Tagore composed stirring songs. *Bande Mataram* 'overnight became the national song of Bengal' and soon became the national song for the whole country. Side by side with constitutional agitation developed Militant Nationalism which had its origin in the pre-Partition years. While the militant nationalists worked in secret and used violent methods, 'Extremist' political leaders like Bepin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh openly promoted the anti-Partition movement. A few Muslim leaders, such as Abdul Rasul, Liaquat Husain and A. K. Ghaznavi, supported the movement. At the early stages it was generally supported by the Muslim masses of East Bengal; but gradually their attitude became hostile. The foundation of the Muslim League at Dacca in December 1906, in which Nawab Salimulla took a leading part, was followed by anti-Hindu riots in some Muslim-majority districts. The British officers had a large share in instigating the Muslims against the Hindus. Many upper and middle class Muslims were won over to the imperialist cause by the propaganda that they would have more jobs in the new province. Appeals to Muslim religious feelings embittered Hindu-Muslim relations.

The 'Extremist' leader, Bepin Chandra Pal, pointed out that the failure to prevent the Partition proved the 'utter futility of our so-called methods of constitutional political agitation'. When the official decision on Partition was finalized the 'Moderate' leaders realized that its annulment could not be secured through mere peaceful demonstrations, public meetings and passing of resolutions. The urge for more positive action led to the Boycott-cum-Swadeshi Movement which was initiated through a crowded public meeting held in Calcutta on 7 August 1905. This new nationalist programme was a two-edged weapon. The boycott of British goods, particularly cotton goods, was intended to bring pressure upon the British manufacturers and workers—and, through them, upon the British Government—by inflicting upon them serious pecuniary loss. *Swadeshi* (use of indigenous goods) was intended to promote indigenous industries and thereby to stimulate the country's economic progress.

The movement, supported by the Hindu masses, had considerable success for about five years, even though the Government took severe repressive measures. By 1910 it was on the

wane. Meanwhile it had spread to other provinces. It had a permanent impact on the development of several industries. Textile mills, soap and match factories, handloom weaving concerns, etc., were founded. Banks and insurance companies were started. In this respect the greatest beneficiaries were Bombay and Ahmedabad where enterprising industrialists came forward to fill the vacuum created by the decrease of British imports. On the whole, however, the movement had no really serious impact on crucial sectors of British economy in India.

Although boycott *cum-Swadeshi* was primarily an economic *cum*-political crusade against the British Government, it had a direct impact on cultural development in Bengal. There was 'a sudden literary outburst in the shape of songs, poems, dramas and *yastras* (a sort of popular drama) which bred a new spirit of nationalism and patriotism'. The literary work of Rabindranath Tagore was supplemented by several other powerful writers. Painting became a national art.

The students played a very important role in the movement, undaunted by official efforts to discipline them by penal measures. The University of Calcutta, which supervised education in schools and colleges, was denounced as a *golam-khana* (house for manufacturing slaves) and a 'National Council of Education' was established with a view to organizing a system of education—literary, scientific, technical—on national lines and under national management. National schools were established. An engineering college sponsored by the National Council of Education developed into the Jadavpur University after Independence.

A Bengali nationalist leader, speaking at the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1906, described 'Swadeshism' as a 'three-faced goddess': 'The one face or aspect of the goddess is political, the second face is industrial, and last, but not the least, is the educational'.

Ramsay Macdonald, who later became the first Labour Prime Minister of England, commented on the contribution of the *Swadeshi* Movement in Bengal to the development of Indian nationalism. He wrote: 'The Bengalee inspires the Indian nationalist movement . . . It is translating nationalism into religion, into music and poetry, into painting and literature . . . It is creating India by song and worship, it is clothing her in queenly garments . . . from this surging of prayer and song and political strife will come India, if India does ever come'.

Congress and Swadeshi Movement

The growing rift between the 'Moderates' and the 'Extremists' cast its shadow over the Congress attitude towards the Boycott-cum-Swadeshi Movement. In 1903 and 1904 the Congress passed resolutions condemning the proposal for Partition of Bengal. Early in 1905 it proposed to wait upon the Viceroy in a deputation to explain its case, but he refused to receive any deputation. G. K. Gokhale and Lajpat Rai were sent to England to appeal to the higher authorities, but they had to return disappointed.

In 1905 the Congress, with G. K. Gokhale as President, recorded its emphatic protest against the Partition of Bengal (which was already an accomplished fact) in the face of the strongest opposition on the part of the people of the province'. But the 'Moderates' were not prepared to extend open support to Boycott which was in conflict with their policy of 'petition and persuasion'. Under pressure from Bengal delegates a colourless compromise resolution was passed, leaving it unclear whether the boycott of British goods was approved or not.

In 1906 the 'Extremists' were able to secure better terms from the 'Moderates'. The Congress, with Dadabhai Naoroji as President, recognized Boycott as 'legitimate' and 'accorded its most cordial support to the *Swadeshi* Movement'. Another resolution asked the people 'to take up the question of national education for both boys and girls'. After the open split in 1907 the Congress, firmly in the grip of the 'Moderates', never reiterated or even discussed the resolutions passed in 1906. They looked upon the movement in Bengal as a local issue and ignored it because it meant a direct confrontation with the Government.

Although Surendra Nath Banerjee was a 'Moderate' he was the topmost leader of the *Swadeshi* Movement in Bengal and he had to seek the co-operation of the 'Extremists' on this issue. Two non-Bengali 'Extremist' leaders, Tilak and Lajpat Rai, rendered great services to the movement by their visits to Bengal and their work on the all-India political platform.

MUSLIM SEPARATISM

Isolation of Muslims from Nationalism

Till the seventies of the nineteenth century the Muslims kept themselves aloof from nationalist political ideas which were gaining ground among the Hindus. This was due to a large extent to their virtual boycott of English education and their adherence to revivalist ideas in the sphere of religion. The Wahabi movement originated in Arabia, and in the Indian environment its primary objective was to restore Islam to the purity which had marked it in the days of the Prophet. Its opposition to British rule was based on the idea that adherence to the true Islamic way of life was not possible under the political control of non-Muslims. This idea involved the Wahabis in a struggle against the Sikhs who had established their rule on the Muslim tribes on the north-west frontier. If the Wahabis had succeeded in driving out the English from India, they would have converted this country into a *dar-ul-Islam* and subjected the Hindus to Muslim rule. This would have been opposed to modern ideas on nationalism and democracy.

Hinduism produced several progressive religious and social reformers in the nineteenth century, but Indian Islam made no attempt to rid itself of obscurantist ideas and old practices in the light of reason. Sir Syed Ahmad's interpretation of Islam ran on orthodox lines and excluded modernisation even though he sponsored the spread of English education among the Muslims for practical reasons.

Revivalism was closely connected with Pan-Islamism. Hinduism was confined to India, but Islam was a world religion. The Indian Muslims formed 'part of an oecumenical community stretching from Morocco to Chinese Turkestan'. Although the Sultan of Turkey became the 'Sick Man of Europe' in the nineteenth century, the Indian Muslims recognized him as the Caliph of Islam and owed religious allegiance to him. The non-territorial character of Islam provided a continuing incentive to a non-territorial patriotism which stood in the way of territorial patriotism, i.e., nationalism. The seeds of Pan-Islamism were actively sown in India in the eighties of the last century by Jamaluddin Afghani, an Arab born in Afghanistan who came to India in or about 1879, as also by the emissaries

of Abdul Hamid II, the reactionary Sultan of Turkey. In the nineties Pan-Islamism became an active force in Bengal and provoked the Calcutta riots of 1897.

Religious tradition and social constraints made the Muslims averse to English education which was the fountain from which nationalist ideas flowed into India. The Hindus eagerly absorbed them; the Muslims, declining to march with them side by side, created a gulf which it became increasingly difficult to bridge.

'Sepoy Mutiny'

The 'Sepoy Mutiny' attained a predominantly Muslim complexion when the sepoys proclaimed the puppet Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah II, as the Emperor of Hindustan. The establishment of the rule of Muslim chiefs in Rohilkhand, the rising of the zamindars—most of them Muslims—in the Doab, and the coronation of the exiled ex-Nawab's son at Lucknow were political developments which the British rulers did not forget after their victory. They persecuted the Muslims with politically unwise vindictiveness and continued to look upon them with suspicion. Syed Ahmad, a junior judicial officer in the Company's service, wrote two books (1858-1860) to prove that the 'Mutiny' was 'a popular outbreak and not confined to one class or creed'. He argued that those Muslims who had 'behaved undutifully' during the 'Mutiny' by refusing 'to identify themselves heartily with the Christians' were guilty of conduct which was 'in the highest degree criminal, and wholly inexcusable'. Thus he began his work for gaining the support of the British rulers for his community. In later years he excused the Muslim 'mutineers' by arguing that they had 'plunged' into the 'Mutiny' after it was started by the Hindus.

Change of British policy

A change in British policy began during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Mayo (1869-72) who, by a cruel irony of fate, was murdered by a Muslim suspected of Wahabi affiliation. Measures began to be taken to redress the grievances of the Muslims with a view to converting their suspected disloyalty into loyalty. At its early stage this new policy would hardly have been intended 'to check the growth of a united national feeling in the country'. The birth of the Congress was far off, the Indian Association thinking in terms of 'a united national feeling in the country' was founded in 1876, and the British Indian Association—the principal political organization in the country—

was firmly in the grip of the conservative zamindars. It is likely that the fear of the British rulers centred upon the growing fanaticism of the Muslim masses and the infiltration of Pan-Islamic ideas.

Sir William Hunter, a top-ranking Civilian, wrote under Mayo's order his well-known book, *The Indian Musalmans*, which was published in 1871. He made a sympathetic analysis of the causes of Muslim discontent. The Permanent Settlement replaced the Muslim revenue-farmers by Hindu zamindars and English Collectors. The Muslim aristocracy was shut out of the Army because the British rulers suspected their loyalty. It was deprived of its 'monopoly of the most lucrative functions in the Administration'. The opportunities enjoyed by the Muslims in 'civil employ' were cut off when Persian ceased to be the language for transaction of official business. Employment was open only to those who received English education which was 'opposed to the traditions, unsuited to the requirements, and hateful to the religion, of the Musalmans'. 'Education was imparted through the vernacular of Bengal, a language which the educated Mohammedans despise, and by means of Hindu teachers whom the whole Mohammedan community hates'. There was no provision for religious instruction. 'A system of purely secular education is certainly altogether unsuited to the illiterate and fanatical peasantry of Bengal'.

Hunter's observations applied only to the Muslims of Bengal although he selected a comprehensive title for his book. 'In Bengal, a generally forward region in terms of education and economic change, the Muslims were generally backward. But in upper India, a generally backward region in terms of education and economic change, they were, if anything, generally forward'. This difference explains the ascendancy in all-India Muslim politics established by the Muslims of upper India in spite of their numerical weakness, and the submission to that ascendancy by the Muslims of Bengal who constituted more than half the total Muslim population of British India.

Although Hunter's analysis had regional implications only, it had an immediate impact on the general policy of the Government of India. In 1871 Mayo's Government adopted a resolution conceding, in principle, the use of Urdu as a medium of instruction for Muslims in primary and secondary schools, increased Government aid for Muslim educational institutions, and com-

bination of English education with Arabic and Persian studies. The Hunter Commission (1882), appointed by Ripon, made some important recommendations including 'liberal encouragement' of higher English education for Muslims, provision for 'special scholarships' and reservation of seats for Muslims and recognition of associations for promotion of Muslim education. On the question of employment Dufferin's Government adopted a general resolution, directing the Local Governments and the High Courts to 'redress inequality' where the Muslims 'did not receive their full share of State employment'.

Political Associations in Bengal

Abdul Latif, the most prominent leader of the Muslims in Bengal in the sixties, recommended English education for the 'worldly class' in his community, though the 'learned class' had 'neither the means nor the inclination nor the motive for studying English'. He approached English education with the object of promoting the material gains of the Muslims; he made no attempt to use it as a source of enlightenment and socio-political awakening.

The Muslims of Bengal took no part in the political associations established by the Hindus in the pre-'Mutiny' years. Their first political association was the *Anjuman-i-Islamia* or the *Muhammadian Association* established in Calcutta in 1855. More important than the *Anjuman* was the *Muhammadian Literary and Scientific Society of Calcutta* founded by Abdul Latif in 1863. It was interested primarily in matters relating to Muslim education, but it was consulted by the Government on political and administrative matters affecting the interests of the Muslims. Abdul Latif, like Sir Syed Ahmad, was anxious to remove the anti-British feeling in his community. In 1870 a well-known religious preacher named Karamat Ali delivered a lecture to the Society, declaring that, as the British rulers did not obstruct the Muslims in the performance of their religious duties, there was no justification for *jihād* (holy war) against them. This view was held also by Sir Syed Ahmad, although it was a direct repudiation of the basic principle of the Wahabi movement.

Abdul Latif, representing the older and conservative Sunnis, found in the seventies a political rival in a young Shia Barrister, Syed Ameer Ali. In later years he distinguished himself as a lawyer, as a judge and as a writer on Islamic history. He served as a member of the Bengal Legislative Coun-

cil as also of the Governor-General's Legislative Council, and as a Judge of the Calcutta High Court. In later life, when he lived in England, he took a keen interest in the fate of the Ottoman Empire and the Khilafat Movement.

In 1877 was founded the *National Mohammedan Association* which Syed Ameer Ali led till his appointment as a High Court Judge in 1890. It followed 'the principle of strict and loyal adherence to the British Crown'. Its principal object was the 'promotion by all legitimate and constitutional means of the well-being of the Mussalmans of India'. Their 'regeneration' was to be sought 'by moral revival and by constant endeavours to obtain from the Government a recognition of their just and reasonable claims'.

Both Abdul Latif and Syed Ameer Ali were generally opposed to co-operation with the Hindus on political matters. Neither of them was Bengali-speaking. Neither of them had contact with the Bengali-speaking Muslim masses. Both of them insisted that Urdu—not Bengali—was the language of the Bengali Muslims, although outside the cosmopolitan city of Calcutta not even one per cent of the Muslims in Bengal proper spoke Urdu. This artificial language issue created a cleavage between the two communities in Bengal.

During the pre-Congress period Calcutta was the centre of Muslim political associations: the *Anjuman*, the *Muhammadian Literary and Scientific Society* and the *National Mohammedan Association* had their headquarters in this city. After the foundation of the Congress the centre of Muslim political activity shifted to Aligarh as a result of Sir Syed Ahmad's activities. Syed Ameer Ali's elevation to the High Court Bench in 1890 left a vacuum in Muslim leadership in Calcutta.

From Calcutta to Aligarh

This change had deeper reasons. The Urdu-speaking Muslim leaders of Calcutta were out of touch with the Bengali-speaking Muslims in the districts. There was no such language barrier in the North-Western Provinces where the Muslim leaders and the Muslim masses spoke the same language (Urdu). The Calcutta Associations were no more than debating societies; their organizational net-work was weak, and they did not have to their credit the establishment of any educational institution like the Aligarh College. That College served not only as a centre of higher education but also as a laboratory for the formulation of political opinions. Its students carried a new

message to the Muslims in different parts of North India. Its English Principals served as an extremely useful link between the Aligarh leaders and the English officials. The diminishing importance of Bengal, which had the largest Muslim population among the provinces of British India, was indicated by the composition of the Simla Deputation of 1906. It had 6 members from Bengal and Eastern Bengal and Assam, 8 from the Punjab and 11 from the North-Western Provinces. Although the Muslim League was founded at Dacca, Aligarh became its head-quarters.

Growth of separatism in Bengal

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century several factors promoted separatist feelings among the Muslims of Bengal. Hunter's book told them that 'a great section of the Indian population, some thirty million in number, finds itself decaying under British rule'. They held the Hindus responsible for their decay, forgetting that their woes were due to political and administrative measures—such as the introduction of the Permanent Settlement, the patronage of English education, the replacement of Persian by English as the language of administration, etc.—for which the British Government alone was responsible. They made little effort to recover the lost ground by utilizing the educational facilities offered by the Government and the stipends granted from the Mohsin Trust Fund (which had its origin in the munificence of Haji Mohammad Mohsin of Hughli).

With a growing sense of grievance was coupled a sense of self-glorification derived from wrong premises. The Census Report of 1872 initiated a controversy on the racial origin of the Muslims of Bengal. The view of authoritative European writers was that they 'were recruited from the dregs of the Hindu community who embraced Islam as a short-cut to social promotion'. A challenge came from a Muslim writer in 1895. He argued that the Bengali Muslims were descended from Arabian, Persian, Turkish and Afghan immigrants and not from the indigenous Hindus. The racial vanity found expression in continuous efforts to get Urdu recognized as the vernacular of the Bengali Muslims.

Successive Census Reports disclosed the growing numerical predominance of the Muslims. This generated a feeling of strength and stimulated insistence on rights and privileges.

Religious orthodoxy promoted communal tension. The

Faraizis were active in some Muslim majority districts in East Bengal. Many *mullahs* and *maulavis*, well-entrenched in the rural areas, promoted an anti-*kafir* attitude among the illiterate masses.

Sir Syed Ahmad : isolation from politics

For about three decades following the 'Mutiny', Sir Syed Ahmad's services to his community were confined to two objectives : introduction of English education and reconciliation with the English rulers. His stronghold was western U. P. where Muslim landlords and service-holders under the British Government exercised much influence. His educational work culminated in the establishment of the Aligarh College in 1877. The other objective had two aspects. The Muslims were to be persuaded that submission to British rule was not inconsistent with the principles of Islam. Here he stood against the Wahabi idea that a *jihad* (holy war) against the Christian infidel rulers was a religious duty. At the same time the British rulers were to 'be persuaded' that the Muslims were loyal subjects who deserved their special favour. Here Hunter's book helped him, for it urged the Government to 'remove the chronic sense of wrong which has grown in the hearts of the Musalmans under British rule'.

It was natural that Sir Syed Ahmad should remain aloof from any kind of political activity which might offend the British rulers. He did not establish any political association, nor did he join the associations established by Abdul Latif and Syed Ameer Ali.

Aligarh College

The foundation of the Anglo-Mohammadan College at Aligarh was laid by Lord Lytton on 8 January 1877. Among the 'objects' of the founders the most important was 'to make the Musalmans of India useful and worthy subjects of the British Crown, to inspire in them that loyalty which springs from genuine appreciation of the blessings of good government'. In 1888 the College Committee claimed that the College had 'succeeded in awakening sentiments which have dissuaded the vast majority of our co-religionists and fellow-subjects from taking part in agitations of a political and quasi-political character'. From its birth the College was a centre not only of English education but also of political training in loyalty. This dual character of the College was shaped by its English Principals—Beck, Morrison and Archbold. Although they were educa-

tionists, they were agents of the British imperial interest. Naturally they walked willingly into the vortex of Muslim politics with a view to mobilising the Muslims against the Hindus who were clamouring for political power.

Sir Syed Ahmad as a political leader

Sir Syed Ahmad's political activities began after the foundation of the Congress (1885). During the last years of his life (1885-98) he played an increasingly important role in promoting 'the separatist tendency (among the Muslims) along communal lines'.

In 1886 he founded the *Mohammadan Educational Congress*: the word 'Congress' was changed to 'Conference' in 1890. In 1888 he founded the *United Indian Patriotic Association* mainly with a view to oppose the Congress. In this enterprise Beck was his principal collaborator. Beck's idea was that Anglo-Muslim unity was possible, but Hindu-Muslim unity was impossible. This was followed by the foundation of the *Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association* in 1894. Through it Beck advised the Muslims that they should have no sympathy with the objects of the Congress.

These developments naturally pleased the British rulers. As early as 1883 the Government of the North Western Provinces hoped that Aligarh would be of 'the greatest importance from a political as well as an educational point of view'. In 1887 the Secretary of State wrote to Lord Dufferin that the 'division of religious feeling is to our advantage'. Next year Dufferin wrote: 'Already it looks as if the Mohammedans were rising in revolt against the ascendancy which they imagine a rival and less virile race (i.e., the Hindus) is desirous of obtaining over them'. In 1897 the Secretary of State looked upon the 'increasing friction' between the two communities as 'a political factor strengthening our position generally'.

Sir Syed Ahmad judged every political and administrative issue by a single test—whether it would serve the interest of his own community. He never thought in terms of the welfare and progress of the people of India as a whole. In 1883 he spoke against introducing the elective principle into the composition of the Legislative Councils on the ground that it was unsuitable for a country in which 'there were differences of race and creed, and distinctions of caste'. He opposed recruiting more Indians into the higher administrative services through competitive examination because the Muslims, being

educationally backward, would have little share in this benefit. He favoured the rule of the aristocracy—not of those who held B.A. or M.A. degrees.

With his eyes fixed on the interest of the Muslims, Sir Syed Ahmad naturally tried to keep them aloof from the Congress which claimed to speak for the Indian people irrespective of communal or provincial divisions. He did not join the first session of the Congress (1885). He asked his co-religionists not to attend the third session of the Congress (1887). He declared later that Surendra Nath Banerjee's demand at that session for the repeal of Lord Lytton's Arms Act was intended to 'rearm the ignorant and excitable populace in order to assist him and his party more effectively in achieving their end'. In 1888 he took up the role of a crusader against the Congress, and founded the *United Indian Patriotic Association* in order to preach his anti-Congress policy. Many public meetings were held, mostly in the North-Western Provinces, and many Muslim organizations in different provinces expressed their support for his Association.

The President of the third (Madras) session of the Congress was a distinguished Muslim leader of Bombay, Badruddin Tyabji. He assured the Muslims that the Congress proposed to do nothing 'which would subject the Musalmans to the Hindus or vest the exclusive power in the Hindus to the detriment of Musalmans'. He said he was 'utterly at a loss to understand why Musalmans should not work shoulder to shoulder with their fellow countrymen of other races and creeds for the benefit of all'. Afterwards he wrote to Sir Syed Ahmad emphasizing the character of the Congress as a representative organization. In reply he was told that the activities of the 'misnamed National Congress' were 'injurious' not only to the Muslims but also to 'India at large'. In his view, the Congress represented the 'agitation of the Bengalis' which was 'not the agitation of the whole of India'. The Hindus and the Muslims could not share power as equals if British rule was eliminated. 'It is necessary that one of them should conquer the other and thrust it down'.

To the persistent Congress demand for increasing the Indian element in the Legislative Councils and the introduction of the principle of election Sir Syed Ahmad's opposition was categorical. Such reform, he was afraid, would 'lead to the political extinction of the Mohammedans' because the

Hindus would get a large majority of seats. After the passing of the Indian Councils Act of 1892 he realized that it would not be possible to resist the Congress demand on these points. So the *Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association* asked for 'a reasonable and just representation' on the Legislative Councils. Afraid of Hindu domination, he consistently urged his co-religionists to keep away from all forms of agitation and to aspire after nothing better than 'a quiet life under the benign rule of the English Government'.

Two-Nation Theory

Sir Syed Ahmad was the 'author of the two-nation theory' which foreshadowed the partition of India in 1947. As early as 1858—when he felt that the Hindus had begun the 'Sepoy Mutiny' but the Muslims had suffered greater persecution by the British rulers—he spoke of 'two antagonistic races'. Then for many years he remained absorbed in his educational activities and aloof from politics. He expressed some admirable sentiments on Hindu-Muslim relations. In 1883 he said: 'I consider Hindus and Musalmans both as one eye'. For him, he said, 'it is a matter of least significance what the religious faith of any people may be, because it is hardly visible to us'.

After the foundation of the Congress the old theory of 'two antagonistic races' re-appeared and infected Indian politics through the Aligarh Movement. Sir Syed Ahmad now spoke frequently of the 'Muhammadan nation'. In 1888 he said that 'two nations'—the Mohammedans and the Hindus—could not 'sit on the same throne': 'one of them should conquer the other'. In such a war, he was confident, victory would be won by the Muslims who had ruled India for six or seven hundred years. 'Our nation', he declared, 'is of the blood of those who made not only Arabia, but Asia and Europe, to tremble'. He claimed non-Indian origin for the Indian Muslims although most of them were descendants of Hindu converts, not of foreign conquerors.

The second Muslim President of the Congress (1896), R. Sayani, made an elaborate analysis of the Muslims' objections to the Congress, taking special notice of Sir Syed Ahmad's arguments, and answering them. He concluded that 'the Congress will never be allowed to run its course for the benefit of sectional, private, or party interests'. He advised the Muslims to 'attend Congress meetings and see for themselves what is going on', instead of 'raising puerile and imaginary objections

from a distance'. This appeal made no impact on Sir Syed Ahmad's ideas or on those Muslims in whose minds those ideas were taking firm roots.

Sir Syed Ahmad : estimate

Sir Syed Ahmad's greatest service to his community was the introduction of English education ; but he kept it confined to a narrow aristocracy of birth and wealth. Traditional Muslim education was provided at the Deoband seminary (founded in 1867) which attracted poor students. Responding to the general outlook of his community, Sir Syed Ahmad coupled English education with theological instruction which was not in conformity with its spirit. Above all, he gave it a special political complexion which ran counter to the rising spirit of nationalism in the country. His educational ideas centred round the creation of a small group dedicated to loyal service to the British Government rather than to raise the average educational standard of his community. He founded only two schools—at Moradabad and at Ghazipur—although a community just entering the field of English education needed many more schools than an Oxford-Cambridge type College as the Aligarh College was intended to be. A network of elementary and secondary schools would have brought English education to humble Muslim homes and provided a solid base for an educational pyramid. But he left the Muslim masses sunk in ignorance and orthodoxy ; they remained blind followers of ignorant *mullahs* and ready to repeat any slogan in the name of Islam. Even at Aligarh the politics of loyalty produced intellectual sterility ; it failed to produce scholars like Syed Ameer Ali or Iqbal who had their education in Europe.

Sir Syed Ahmad's political legacy for later generations had three principal features. The first and foremost was unqualified acceptance of, and loyalty to, British rule. He quoted the Prophet's saying that Muslims must obey a Negro slave if God placed him over them as their ruler. He believed that the continuance of British rule was a guarantee for the welfare and progress of his community. The second feature was the theory that Hindus and Muslims were two separate, distinct and potentially hostile 'nations'. Their conflict of interest could be kept under control only by British authority, and if that authority was withdrawn there would be 'civil war with arms'. The third feature was recognition of the monopoly of the Muslim aristocracy of such privileges—nominated seats

in Legislative Councils and other public bodies, employment, etc.—as the British Government might confer on the 'Mahomedan nation'. He said that it was 'not expedient for Government to bring the men of low rank' to prominence. This insistence on the exclusive leadership of the aristocracy had a long-term effect on Muslim politics. The Muslim League was dominated throughout its history by the landed aristocracy.

Aligarh Movement

Sir Syed Ahmad's death in 1898 temporarily weakened, but did not cripple, the political movement of which Aligarh had been the centre during the last twenty years of his life. It was indirectly strengthened by the slow penetration of Pan-Islamic ideas introduced by Jamaluddin Afghani and the emissaries of the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II. During the Anglo-Egyptian War of 1881-82 some Indian Muslim leaders sympathized with Arabi Pasha, the nationalist leader of Egypt, who fought against the imposition of British control over his country. During Curzon's Viceroyalty Aligarh College established contact with Persia under official auspices, and some Persian noble families actually sent their boys to Aligarh for education. During the war between Italy and Turkey in 1911-12, as also during the Balkan Wars (1912-13), a wave of sympathy for Turkey swept the Indian Muslims. A medical mission, led by Dr. M. A. Ansari, was sent to help Turkey.

The Indian Muslims' sympathy for Turkey alarmed the British Government, for Turkey had succumbed to German influence and Anglo-German rivalry was developing during the early years of the present century. It was felt that this Pan-Islamic trend should be counteracted. Another—and more important—factor was the fear that the Muslims might be won over by the Congress. On this point the Secretary of State, Lord Morley, warned Lord Minto who succeeded Lord Curzon as Viceroy towards the end of 1905. Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, Secretary of Aligarh College, who had started in 1901 an ineffective body called the *Mohammedan Political Organization*, realized that the inactivity of the elder Muslim leaders was driving the younger Muslims 'to throw in their lot with advanced agitators of the Congress'. Moreover, Morley was thinking of constitutional reforms; if elections were introduced on a large scale the Muslims would be swamped by the Hindus under the influence of the Congress.

This common objective of the British Government and the

Aligarh leaders, viz., to keep the Muslims aloof from the Hindus and the Congress, was the background of the Simla Deputation which was arranged by Mohsin-ul-Mulk in co-operation with the Principal of the Aligarh College, W.A.J. Archbold (later Principal of the Dacca College), who was in contact with high British officials including Dunlop Smith, the Viceroy's Private Secretary. It was a 'command performance'; the strategy was 'engineered' by persons connected with the Government. This view is supported by clear documentary evidence. Moreover, the importance which Lord Minto assigned to an unrepresentative Deputation indicates a pre-concerted plan.

Simla Deputation (1906): Separate Electorates

On 1 October 1906 a Muslim Deputation, composed of 35 persons—most of them belonging to the aristocracy—and led by the Aga Khan, 'the spiritual head of the Khoja Muslim community'—met Lord Minto at Simla.

The address presented by the Deputation claimed special privileges for the Muslims on three grounds. First, numerically they constituted between one-fourth and one-fifth of India's population. They constituted 'a community in itself more numerous than the entire population of any first class European power except Russia'. Secondly, in assessing their weight not merely their numerical strength but also 'their political importance and the value of the contribution which they make to the defence of the Empire' should be taken into consideration. Thirdly, due consideration should also be paid to the position which they occupied in India a little more than a century ago (when they were the rulers of the country), and of which the traditions had not faded from their minds.

This address marks an important stage in the development of separatism. The Muslims were represented as a community with an identity separate from that of the other communities. They claimed a privileged position on the ground of 'political importance' (which was not defined), military service (i.e., enlistment in the Army) and historical memories of their lost political power. Such weightage was repugnant to the form and spirit of representative institutions and inconsistent with the Congress demand for a higher political status for India.

Minto's reply contained the categorical assurance that the 'political rights and interests of the Muslims as a community' would be 'safeguarded'. He agreed with the Deputation that 'in any system of representation—in municipalities, District Boards

and Legislative Councils—in which the principle of election was introduced, the Muslims should be represented *separately* as a community—not *jointly* with the other communities as a section of the general body of voters. This representation was not to be regulated only by their numerical strength; 'their political importance' and 'service to the Empire' would be taken into consideration. This meant that they would be allotted a larger number of seats than they were entitled to get on the basis of their numerical strength. The Viceroy did not recognize the claim of the Congress that India had 'one nationality'; he spoke of 'the myriads comprising the population of India'. This was an implied approval of the 'two-nation theory'.

Minto's policy, it has been argued, was 'to secure the representation of various classes and interests on the Legislative Councils'; it was not based on the idea of 'Divide and Rule'. But only one community was picked up for special treatment; others—like the Sikhs who were loyal during the 'Sepoy Mutiny' and continued to contribute substantially to the 'defence of the Empire'—were left in the cold. The Viceroy's real purpose was to cut off the Muslims from the mainstream of India's political life. A British official wrote to Lady Minto immediately after the reception of the Deputation: 'It is nothing less than the pulling back of 62 millions of people from joining the ranks of the seditious opposition' (i.e., the Congress). He described it as 'an act of statesmanship that will affect India and Indian history for many a long year'. He was more than correct. Minto's promise on introduction of Separate Electorates strengthened the 'two-nation theory' and led ultimately to the Partition of India.

Muslim League

The Simla Deputation was followed in Eastern Bengal by Muslim meetings in support of the Partition of Bengal. Demonstrations in support of official policies were encouraged by the Government as a counterblast to the *Swadeshi* Movement. The Deputationists, encouraged by their success, realized the value of 'independent organization and action'. So Sir Syed Ahmad's policy of avoidance of organized political agitation was given up.

The initiative was taken by Nawab Habibulla of Dacca who, favoured by Curzon with a generous loan, had taken up leadership of the pro-Partition movement and provoked Muslim resistance to the *Swadeshi* Movement. He could not

join the Simla Deputation, but he issued a circular letter to some prominent Muslims in different provinces containing a scheme for a 'Muslim All-India Confederacy'. A meeting was held at Dacca on 30 December 1906. It was decided to form a political association, called the *All-India Muslim League*, with three objectives: (1) to promote among the Muslims loyalty to the British Government; (2) 'to protect and advance the political rights and interests of the Muslims and respectfully to represent their needs and aspirations to the Government'; (3) to prevent the rise among the Muslims of any feelings of hostility towards other communities 'without prejudice to the other objects of the League'. The Aga Khan was elected permanent President of the League. Its headquarters were established at Aligarh, but its central office was shifted to Lucknow in 1910.

During the years 1907-9 the main programme of the Muslim League was to fight for consolidation and extension of Separate Electorates. Its political activities were directed not against the foreign rulers but against the Congress and the Hindus. Its leaders, belonging to the upper class, had little in common with the Muslim masses, and they did not fight for the removal of their grievances—particularly those in the economic field.

During the years 1910-13 new forces came into play in Muslim politics. Some of its leaders realized that a *rapprochement* with the Hindus was desirable. Britain's apparent hostility to Turkey in the Turko-Italian War (1911-12) and the Balkan Wars (1912-13) made a large section of Muslim leaders critical of British policy. Their Pan-Islamic sympathies—not their interest in India's political progress—made them partly anti-British. Secondly, the younger section of rising Muslim leaders disliked the loyalist politics of the Aligarh group and the leadership of big Nawabs and zamindars. The 'militantly nationalist Ahrar movement' was founded at this time under the leadership of Maulana Mohammad Ali, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Hasan Imam, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, and Mazhar-ul-Haq. Thirdly, some young scholars influenced by the Deoband school of Muslim studies (in Uttar Pradesh) were affected by nationalist sentiments. Among them the most prominent was Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a future President of the Congress. Educated at the famous Al Azhar University at Cairo and well-versed in Islamic learning, he began to propagate his rationalist and nationalist ideas through the Urdu newspaper *Al Hilal* which he brought out in 1912 at the age of 24.

In 1913 there was a significant change in the programme of the Muslim League. The three objectives adopted in 1906 were replaced by the following : (1) the promotion among Indians of loyalty to the British Crown ; (2) the protection of the rights of Muslims ; (3) 'without detriment to the foregoing objects, the attainment of the system of self-government suitable to India'. For the first time the Muslim League spoke of 'self-government' for 'India'. It was a clear repudiation of Sir Syed Ahmad's political ideal of unqualified hostility towards co-operation with the Hindus as also of the leadership of the Aligarh aristocrats. The young generation of the Muslims was moved by the winds of change: pursuit of a common political objective along with the Hindus became possible.

CONSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

(1907-19)

1. MORLEY-MINTO REFORMS

Background of reforms

Lord Morley, a 'Philosophical Radical', and Lord Minto, a Conservative, guided British policy towards India for five years (1906-10) as Secretary of State and Governor-General respectively. The problem which they had to face was 'acute and widespread discontent' in India. Lord Curzon's administration had 'resulted in bitter resentment all around', but this was due not only to his policies, such as the Partition of Bengal, but also to some other factors. Economic distress was widespread. There were more than twenty famines during the four decades following the end of the Company's regime; but instead of improving the economic condition of the country through industrialization, official policy subordinated the infant industries and manufactures in India to the interests of the industries and manufactures in England. Economic distress under British rule was the theme of R. C. Dutt's two books on *Economic History of India* published at the beginning of the present century. Dadabhai Naoroji's *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, originally published in 1876, was reissued in 1901. Economic issues directly affecting the 'voiceless millions' were being pushed to the front by political leaders. Secondly, during the early years of the century pestilence, particularly plague, killed so many people that Morley spoke of the figures as 'appalling'. Thirdly, much discontent was caused by racial discrimination, not only in the matter of employment and promotion in the higher administrative posts, but also in criminal cases in which Europeans were the accused and in general behaviour of Europeans towards Indians. Curzon tried 'to arrest these dangerous symptoms'; he was afraid that these 'might even threaten the existence of our rule in the future'.

As the nineteenth century drew to its close it became possible to draw nationalist inspiration from new anti-colonial struggles in Africa and Asia. There are references to contact between Indian and Egyptian nationalists. 'The rout of Italy

by Abyssinia is supposed to have added fire to Tilak's agitation in 1897'. The reaction against the ascendancy of the West received a powerful stimulus from Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War (1905). A British writer observed : 'The real causes of unrest in India sprang from that quickening of new aspirations which swept throughout Asia as a result of the victories of Japan'.

Genesis of constitutional reforms

The coming of the Liberal party to power in England and the appointment of a 'Philosophical Radical' as Secretary of State for India in December 1905 raised expectations about early constitutional changes. Morley thought of 'making a good start in the way of reform in the popular direction', but the Conservative Viceroy warned him about the danger 'of attempting to import into India English political institutions'. Morley assured Minto that he was not prepared to 'go over bag and baggage to the Congress people', but he made it clear that changes in the Legislative Councils had to be made. Thus the new policy was initiated by the Secretary of State. At his request the Viceroy, in consultation with Members of his Executive Council, prepared detailed proposals which he sent to London early in 1907.

Executive Councils

As early as 1898 Ananda Mohan Bose, speaking as President of the Congress, urged that there was 'grave need for the expansion and reform of our Executive Councils and, it may be, of their formation where they do not exist, with adequate Indian representation in them'. There were only three Executive Councils—those of the Governor-General and the Governors of Madras and Bombay—and none of them had any Indian Member. The Congress President for 1899, R. C. Dutt, wanted three Indian Members in the Governor-General's Executive Council and at least one Indian Member in each Provincial Executive Council. Morley considered the matter and, in spite of initial opposition from Minto, decided that each of the three Executive Councils should have one Indian Member. He said : 'We believe that this admission of the Indians to a larger and more direct share in the government of the country and in all the affairs of their country, without for a moment taking from the central power its authority, will fortify the foundations of our position'.

Such appointments did not require any change in the exist-

ing law. Morley treated them as a 'demonstration' of the British Government's desire to fulfil 'the famous promise made in the Proclamation of Queen Victoria in 1858, that 'if a man is fully qualified in proved ability and character to fill a certain post, he shall not be shut out by race or religious faith'. In 1909 a Bengali lawyer, Satyendra Prasanna Sinha, was appointed Member of the Governor-General's Executive Council. In later years he presided over the Congress, was raised to the English peerage and appointed as a member of the Ministry in England, and ended his political career as Governor of Bihar.

Two years earlier—in 1907—two Indians—Syed Husain Bilgrami, a minister of the Nizam of Hyderabad, and K. G. Gupta, a Bengali member of the Indian Civil Service—were appointed members of the Council of India, i.e., the Secretary of State's Council. These were political concessions, not constitutional changes. Nationalist opinion was not satisfied, for Bilgrami (who had been a member of the Simla Deputation of 1906) was known to be opposed to introduction of reforms, and Gupta—a bureaucrat—was not a spokesman of the people.

Indian Councils Act (1909)

The reform proposals sent to London in 1907 by Minto went through substantial changes in course of negotiations between the Secretary of State and the Government of India, and in their changed form they provided the basis of the Indian Councils Act passed by Parliament in 1909. In form it was an amendment of the Indian Councils Acts of 1861 and 1892.

The 'additional members' of the Legislative Councils would henceforth belong to two categories, some nominated by the Governor-General, Governor or Lieutenant-Governor, and some 'elected under Regulations made under this Act'. This meant the introduction of the principle of direct election. It was a constitutional innovation—a logical follow-up of the limited recognition of indirect election under the Act of 1892. The maximum number of nominated and elected members was laid down: Governor-General's Legislative Council, 60; the Legislative Councils of Madras, Bombay, Bengal, the United Provinces, Eastern Bengal and Assam, 50 each; the Legislative Councils of the Punjab and Burma, 30 each. Piloting the Bill in the House of Commons, Prime Minister Asquith observed that this new system was 'calculated to associate gradually but safely more and more the people of India with the administration of their own affairs, and consistent in every respect with

the maintenance of our Imperial supremacy'. A change was necessitated by developments such as 'the spread of education, the great inter-communication between the East and the West, and the infiltration among the educated classes of the Indian people of ideas which 50 or 60 years ago were perfectly alien to them and which nobody imagined would ever exist'.

The Executive Councils of the Governors of Madras and Bombay would be constituted of not more than four members. Provision was made for the immediate creation of an Executive Council for the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, with not more than four members, as also for any other province under a Lieutenant-Governor later with previous intimation to Parliament.

The Legislative Councils were empowered to 'discuss the annual financial statement' of the Government concerned, to 'discuss any matter of general public interest', and to 'ask questions'. The 'old conception of the Council as a mere legislative committee of the Government' was given up and it secured 'the very important right of discussing administrative matters and of cross-examining Government on its replies to questions'. But no unofficial Bill could be introduced, and the Government could not be censured. 'The new powers accorded to it crossed the boundary from what was really an advisory body of counsellors only slightly connected with the general public to what was in fact a deliberative public body'. This was a 'natural extension of the previously existing system', i.e., the system introduced by the Indian Councils Acts of 1861 and 1862. No new policy was involved; 'the change was one of degree and not of kind'. Morley declared that 'this chapter of reforms' was not intended to 'lead directly or necessarily up to the establishment of a Parliamentary system in India'.

Separate Electorates

Minto's reply to the Simla Deputation of 1906 committed the British Government to the principle of Separate Electorates for the benefit of the Muslims. A British historian says: 'It may perhaps be described as an official germ of Pakistan'. The Regulations made under the Act of 1909 implemented this principle, i.e., seats were allotted to the Muslims on the communal basis. They were also given two special privileges. They were given direct representation which was denied to other communities. They were given the right of plural voting; in some provinces they voted in three places. This was

protecting the interests of a minority with a vengeance'. No such protection was extended to the Hindu (or Sikh) minorities in the Punjab and in Eastern Bengal and Assam.

Morley raised this unfair distribution of seats in the Legislative Councils to the level of a historical-cum-philosophical theory. He anticipated Jinnah's full-fledged 'two-nation theory'. 'The difference between Mohammedanism and Hinduism', he said, 'is not a mere difference of articles of religious faith. It is a difference in life, in tradition, in history, in all the social things as well as articles of belief that constitute a community'. He did not call the Muslims a 'nation'; he called them a 'community'. But his statement, repeated by Prime Minister Asquith, and the privileges given to the Muslims under the Act of 1909, directly promoted separatist feelings among them which had been generated by the Aligarh Movement.

The political consequences of the Separate Electorates were stressed in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report (1918). It observed that 'the history of self-government among the nations who developed it . . . is decisively against the admission by the State of any divided allegiance—against the State's arranging its members in any way which encourages them to think of themselves primarily as citizens of any smaller unit than itself'. The Muslims, enjoying political privileges on the basis of their religion, thought of themselves as a self-contained 'unit' separated from the rest of their fellow-countrymen.

Nationalists and Morley-Minto Reforms

The Congress, fully controlled by the 'Moderates' since the split of 1907, criticised the Separate Electorates and some other anomalies in the electoral system, but it did not question the general principle of the Morley-Minto Reforms, i.e., refusal to introduce the Parliamentary system. G. K. Gokhale, one of the leading 'Moderates', was in contact with Morley and Lord Hardinge who succeeded Minto as Viceroy in October 1910. Through him 'a sort of unavowed *entente*' grew up between the Congress and the British Government. Gokhale expected that 'agitation from outside' would now be replaced by 'responsible association with the administration'. But the scope for 'association' was extremely limited, and there was no opportunity of sharing the Government's responsibility in shaping policy and running the administration.

The First Great War stimulated political aspirations in different quarters for different reasons. The 'Extremists' and

the Indian revolutionaries (who were active at home and abroad) were encouraged by the Irish Rebellion. The Indian industrialists and the commercial classes resented war-time restrictions imposed by the Government. For the Muslims it was a sore point that Britain was at war with their Caliph (the Sultan of Turkey). Lokamanya Tilak, released from prison in 1914, renewed his political activities. The 'Moderates' had become 'a vague political group, important because of individual ability but without collective organisation'. They were considerably weakened by the death of Gokhale and Sir Pherozeshah Mehta in 1915.

There was a recognisable change in the political atmosphere in India. This was recognized by Gokhale who prepared a scheme of reforms just before his death. This was recognized by the British Government as well. Prime Minister Asquith declared that 'henceforth Indian questions would have to be approached from a different angle of vision'.

The Montagu-Chelmsford Report (1918) noted that the Morley-Minto Reforms 'ceased in the brief space of ten years' time to satisfy the political hunger of India'. For this there were several causes. 'The sphere in which the Councils could affect the Government's action, both in respect of finance and administration, was closely circumscribed'. There was no 'general advance' in local self-government. There was 'no widespread admission of Indians in greater numbers into the public service'. As the reformed Councils failed to fulfil the expectations of the people, they turned with new hopes to the Congress and the Muslim League. These provided 'platforms for prominent speakers' who 'belittled the utility of the Councils' and even 'denounced them as a cynical and calculated sham'.

2. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Annulment of Partition of Bengal (1911)

Morley and Minto treated the Partition of Bengal as a 'settled fact'. Against the nationalists who tried to unsettle it through agitation and the militant nationalists who used the bomb the Viceroy used two weapons : repression and encouragement to communal riots. But these weapons failed, and Lord Hardinge thought even before his arrival in India that 'Bengal was seething with sedition, the outcome of the policy of parti-

tion'. After reaching Calcutta he 'realized the state of political unrest and terrorism that prevailed'. He was 'most anxious for a policy of conciliation in view of the impending visit of the King (George V) and Queen within a year's time'. He reported to the Secretary of State, Lord Crewe (who had succeeded Morley), that 'the political power of the Bengalis has not been broken' by the Partition. So the Partition had failed to fulfil Curzon's main objective. Moreover, there were administrative and financial difficulties in the province of Eastern Bengal and Assam.

The Secretary of State and the Viceroy prepared a scheme in 1911 for 'Transfer of the seat of the Government of India from Calcutta to Delhi and constitutional changes in Bengal'. 'The choice of Delhi as capital was based on geographical, historical and political grounds'. The 'geographical' factor was irrelevant, for Delhi was not situated in the heart of India. The 'historical' factor meant a plan to mollify the Muslims by an apparent revival of the Mughal tradition. The really important factor was 'political'. Calcutta, the storm-centre of Bengali agitation, was to be reduced to the status of a provincial capital, and Delhi, a city isolated from political currents, was to be the Viceroy's seat.

The Partition was annulled. A new province of Bengal, consisting of all Bengali-speaking districts except Sylhet, was created and placed under a Governor with an Executive Council and a Legislative Council. Assam, including the Bengali-speaking district of Sylhet, reverted to the status which had been accorded to it in 1874: it was placed under a Chief Commissioner, but given a Legislative Council. Bihar and Orissa, separated from Bengal, were united in a single province and placed under a Lieutenant-Governor with a Legislative Council. The scheme was announced by the King-Emperor at the Delhi Durbar on 12 December 1911. The changes came into effect on 1 April 1912.

This arrangement 'gratified Bengali sentiment' in so far as it placed all Bengali-speaking districts except Sylhet under a single administration, but the new province lost some districts in the Bengal-Bihar border region which were largely Bengali-speaking and rich in minerals. As the population of this province had a marginal Muslim majority, the ground was prepared for the Partition of 1947. The transfer of the imperial capital was a serious blow at the political importance of

Calcutta. On the whole, Curzon's objective of weakening the Bengali Hindus was followed in a different way.

Congress and Muslim League

Several factors contributed towards political co-operation between the Congress and the Muslim League for about a decade. Free to a large extent from the control of the old die-hards of the Aligarh School, the League adopted in 1913 a resolution which included 'the attainment of the system of self-government suitable to India' among its objectives. The old unquestioning acceptance of British rule in its nineteenth-century form was given up. This brought it very close to the Congress, for as early as 1905 Gokhale had 'prescribed for India a form of government similar to what exists in the self-governing colonies of the British Empire'. In 1908 the first article of the constitution of the Congress defined its 'objects' as follows: 'the attainment by the people of India of a system of government similar to those enjoyed by the self-governing members of the British Empire, and a participation by them in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with those members'.

The Muslim urge for co-operation with the Congress in constitutional agitation against the British Government was prompted largely by their sympathy for Turkey. Among them there was a restlessness which, aggravated by the open hostilities between England and Turkey during the First Great War, developed later into the Khilafat Movement. Maulana Mohammad Ali, presiding over the Congress in 1923, said that 'the bitter experience of (British) ill-will against the Muslim States and populations abroad hastened the conversion of the Musalmans to the view that to rely on this foreign and non-Muslim Government for support and sympathy . . . was futile, and . . . they must have a lasting and equitable settlement with the other sister communities of India'. In 1916 the Congress and the League held their sessions simultaneously at Lucknow and concluded an agreement for co-operation known as the 'Lucknow Pact'.

A very important change occurred inside the Congress in 1916. Tilak, excluded from the 1907 session for his 'Extremism', joined the annual session at Lucknow and, with the co-operation of Annie Besant and Bepin chandra Pal, secured control over the organization. Once again the Congress became a united body and its character was changed. As Lajpat Rai,

an 'Extremist', wrote: 'India of 1917 is different from India of 1907. In 1907 we were fighting for crumbs. In 1917 we no longer pray for concessions but are demanding rights'.

Home Rule Movement

The end of the split in the Congress and the Lucknow Pact were preceded, and accelerated, by the beginning of the Home Rule Movement.

After release from prison in 1914 Tilak considerably modified his political views. He denied that he had ever entertained any intention of overthrowing the British Government. In 1915, at a Provincial Congress organized by him at Poona, he declared that it was in India's interest that Britain should win the war, for there was greater hope of *Swaraj* from her. He condemned acts of violence as impediments in the way of political progress. He became less rigid in his religious and social views and realized the necessity of a Hindu-Muslim settlement on political issues.

Tilak found an able collaborator in Mrs. Annie Besant 'who brought a knowledge of European political methods' to the Indian political struggle. She had come to India in 1893, devoted herself to the cause of social and educational uplift, and attracted public attention as head of the Theosophical Society. Realizing that no real progress could be achieved without securing self-government, she plunged herself into the political struggle. She was convinced that the 'Moderates,' who at that time controlled the Congress, were too weak to secure self-government; so she decided to launch the Home Rule Movement in 1914. Its aim was self-government for India within the British Empire; its programme included 'religious liberty, national education, social reform, and political reform'. In September 1916 she formally started the *Home Rule League* as an independent political organization after the 'Moderate' leaders had rejected her proposal of setting it up as an auxiliary of the Congress. Many branches were established in different parts of the country. A few months earlier (April 1916) Tilak had established an *Indian Home Rule League* with the object of attaining 'Home Rule or self-government within the British Empire by all constitutional means'.

The two Home Rule Leagues worked in close co-operation. The Government of India realized that the 'vocal classes' were being led by Mrs. Besant and Tilak and the 'Moderate' leaders had lost public support. Mrs. Besant was interned in June

1917, but the Home Rule Movement was not weakened. She dropped her League after Montagu's Declaration of August 1917. As a mark of appreciation of her work the Congress elected her as its President in 1917. Tilak, however, continued the Home Rule Movement. Montagu, during his visit to India (1917-18), found him to be 'at the moment probably the most powerful leader in India'.

The Home Rule Leagues propagated political ideas through discussion, lectures and circulation of pamphlets. Their activities strengthened the nationalist movement in Maharashtra and Bengal as also in provinces where it was comparatively weak—Madras, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat.

The Home Rule Movement had two very important political consequences. First, it hastened the formulation of a new policy by the British Government which was defined in Montagu's Declaration. The Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford (successor of Lord Hardinge) wrote to the Secretary of State that in the absence of any definite official announcement in regard to the demand for Home Rule, the movement led by Mrs. Besant and Tilak was 'attracting many of those who hitherto have held less advanced views'. Secondly, the 'Moderates' were finally ousted from control over the Congress. Mrs. Besant's election as President marked a new era in the history of the Congress. She declared: 'India is no longer on her knees for boons; she is on her feet for rights'. Under her leadership the Congress adopted a resolution strongly urging 'the necessity for the immediate enactment of a Parliamentary statute providing for the establishment of responsible government in India, the full measure to be attained within a time limit to be fixed in the statute itself, at an early date'.

Estimate of Tilak

Tilak (1856-1920) occupies a unique position among the great national leaders of the pre-Gandhian period. He acquired high proficiency in English education as a graduate of the Bombay University and founded the English school which developed into the Fergusson College at Poona. He was an accomplished Oriental scholar. His book, *The Arctic Home in the Vedas*, and his commentary on the *Gita* testify to his mastery of Indian antiquities and Hindu philosophy. Though an 'intellectual aristocrat', he 'brought himself down to the level of the common people, and initiated that mass movement in the political field which worked such a miracle in the hands

of Mahatma Gandhi'. Through his two journals, the *Mahratta* (in English) and the *Keshari* (in Marathi), he taught the people to become bold, courageous and self-reliant fighters for India's freedom. Conservative in socio-religious matters, he was an 'Extremist' in politics and had contact with Militant Nationalism. Though sometimes regarded as a sponsor of 'Hindu revivalism', he was not communal in outlook. He realized the importance of Hindu-Muslim unity and contributed to the Lucknow Pact (1916). Through the Home Rule Movement he set up a new political ideal before the country.

Lucknow Pact : Congress-League Scheme (1916)

Some proposals relating to constitutional reforms were agreed upon by the Congress and the Muslim League and incorporated in resolutions separately passed by them at their annual sessions held simultaneously at Lucknow in December 1916. This agreement is generally known as the *Lucknow Pact* or the *Congress-League Scheme*. It is customary to say that it 'marked an important step forward in Hindu-Muslim unity'. But it was really an agreement for co-operation in the political field on the basis of a common programme. The followers of the Muslim League did not join the Congress which claimed to be a national organization. The Hindus, and the Muslims for whom the League spoke, remained separate entities; the latter did not adopt a secular outlook or realize that they had no political interests separate from those of the Hindus. What was really achieved at Lucknow was a temporary truce, not abandonment by the Muslims of the basic Aligarh tradition of separatism. 'The Lucknow Pact left the way open to the future resurgence of communalism in Indian politics'.

The preamble of the Congress-League Scheme asked for a Royal Proclamation 'announcing that it is the aim and intention of British policy to confer self-government on India at an early date . . . and in the reconstruction of the Empire India should be lifted from the position of a dependency to that of an equal partner in the Empire with the self-governing Dominions'. This enunciation of objectives was followed by 49 proposals.

It was proposed that the Provincial Legislative Councils and the Governor-General's Legislative Council should be expanded in size; four-fifths of the members should be elected and one-fifth nominated. The Muslims should be represented

through 'special electorates' and seats should be reserved for them in every province. In the Governor-General's Legislative Council one-third of the Indian elected members should be Muslims. Elaborate suggestions were offered for division of legislative powers and sources of revenue between the Centre and the provinces. Every province should have a Governor with an Executive Council. Not less than one-half of the Members of each Executive Council should be Indians elected by the elected members of the Provincial Councils. One-half of the Members of the Governor-General's Executive Council should be Indians. Resolutions of the Legislature were to be generally binding on the Executive. The power of making appointments to the Indian Civil Service should vest in the Government of India. The control of the Government of India over the Provincial Governments, and of the Secretary of State over the Government of India, should be relaxed. The military and naval services, both in commissioned and non-commissioned ranks, should be thrown open to Indians.

The formal acceptance of Separate Electorates by the Congress was a positive gain for the Muslims; it survived when the feeble structure of Hindu-Muslim unity collapsed after the failure of the Khilafat Movement. So far as the other details are concerned, the Congress-League Scheme violated some basic principles of the system of constitutional government. It did not offer a practical framework for responsible government. There was no bold demand for the immediate attainment of the constitutional position which the British self-governing colonies had already reached. It was a half-hearted plan for a middle position between dependence and self-government.

Nineteen Members' Memorandum (1916)

A few weeks before the adoption of the Congress-League Scheme 19 elected members of the Governor-General's Legislative Council had submitted to the Viceroy a memorandum containing proposals of constitutional reform (November 1916). 'What is wanted', they observed, 'is not merely good government or efficient administration, but government that is acceptable to the people because it is responsible to them'. Their proposals were generally similar to those of the Congress-League scheme, but they were silent on the crucial question of the relation between the Executive and the Legislature.

3. MILITANT NATIONALISM

Revolutionary activities in India before First Great War

The revolutionary activities in Bengal got a great impetus from the *Swadeshi* Movement. Neither the Alipore Conspiracy Case, nor the repressive policy of Lord Minto, nor Aurobindo's exit from political life could weaken the movement. No less than 64 persons—police officers and their collaborators as also unfaithful revolutionaries who betrayed party secrets—were murdered between 1907 and 1917. Unsuccessful attempts were made to kill the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Andrew Fraser, and the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge. Money was collected generally through dacoities. Arms were collected through purchase from foreign soldiers and smugglers of cocaine.

There were revolutionaries in some other provinces. In the Punjab the work started by Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh was continued, after their deportation, by Har Dayal. In Maharashtra the *Abinava Bharata*, a society founded by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, established a network of secret societies in different provinces. In the United Provinces secret societies were organized by two Bengali revolutionaries, Sachindra Nath Sanyal and Rashbehari Bose. Madras was affected by the exciting speeches of Bepin Chandra Pal, and a secret association was organized by Savarkar's followers.

Revolutionary activities in India during First Great War

During the First Great War the revolutionaries working in India were encouraged by the activities of the Indian revolutionaries working in Germany and in the United States. The situation appeared to be favourable for a bold bid for independence through armed conflict. A large section of white troops was withdrawn from India to fight in Europe; Britain's military power in India was weakened. The revolutionaries expected financial and military aid—at least supply of arms—from the enemies of Britain—Germany and Turkey.

Bengal

In Bengal preparations were made for an armed rising under the leadership of Jatindra Nath Mukherjee and Jadugopal Mukherjee. A large consignment of arms was seized from a Calcutta firm. Narendra Nath Bhattacharya was sent to Java to arrange landing of German arms on or near the Bengal coast. Plans were made for disruption of rail com-

munications and seizure of Fort William through the secret co-operation of Indian troops. But Jatindra Nath Mukherjee and some of his followers were killed in an armed encounter with the police near the Buri Balam river in Balasore in Orissa (1915). This killed all hopes of a large-scale rising.

The Punjab

The *Ghadar* Party of Indian revolutionaries in the United States sent a large number of Indians, mostly Punjabis, back to their country to stir up rebellion. Some of them were caught and interned by the Government; others entered India and planned a general rising as soon as German arms and ammunitions would be received. They established contact with the revolutionaries in Bengal who had been working on the same lines. Their hope lay in the fact that there was a very small number of English troops in India. The leadership of the proposed big enterprise was assumed by Rashbehari Bose; his chief associate was Sachindra Nath Sanyal. Elaborate preparations were made, but the plan was betrayed to the police by an informer who had enrolled himself as a member of his party. A large number of revolutionaries were arrested, tried, and punished (Lahore Conspiracy Cases).

In the Punjab the Muslims, who did not take any active part in revolutionary activities in other provinces, organized a conspiracy which was probably part of a general conspiracy led by Maulvi Obeidulla of the Islamic school of learning at Deoband (in the United Provinces). Links were established with Turkey and Kabul. This was a revival of the old Wahabi idea of *jihad* (religious war) against the British. It had no ideological kinship with Militant Nationalism although there was a common objective, viz., liberation from British rule. After failure in India Obeidulla, associated with Mahendra Pratap, set up a 'Provisional Government of Free India' in Kabul.

In 1914 Baba Gurdit Singh, a Sikh, chartered the Japanese ship *Komagata Maru* for carrying a large number of Punjabis to Canada. As they were not allowed to land in Canada, the ship returned with the passengers and was moored at Budge-Budge near Calcutta. The Government looked upon them as associates of the *Ghadar* Party and made arrangements for sending them immediately to the Punjab. Most of them refused to go. They were fired upon; some were killed, the rest were arrested.

Revolutionary activities of Indians outside India

From its early phase the anti-British revolutionary movement had centres in foreign countries. Shyamji Krishna Varma founded the *Indian Home Rule Society* in London in 1905, started a paper called the *Indian Sociologist*, and attracted revolutionaries like Savarkar, Har Dayal and Madan Lal Dhingra. Savarkar carried on propaganda in England from 1906 till his arrest there in 1910. Har Dayal joined the Indian revolutionaries in the United States and organized the *Ghadar Party* from a previously existing nucleus called the *Indian Independence League*. Dhingra murdered Curzon Wylie in London in 1909 'as an humble protest against the inhuman transportation and hangings of Indian youths'. Savarkar, sent to India, was sentenced to transportation for life. Madam Bhikhaji Rustam C. R. Cama, an associate of Shyamji, known as the 'Mother of the Indian Revolution', carried on revolutionary propaganda in Europe and the United States.

The *Ghadar Party* (*ghadar* means rebellion) conducted a weekly paper, *Hindustan Ghadar*, in three languages (Urdu, Marathi, Punjabi) in San Francisco. Its editor, Har Dayal, had to leave the United States as a result of the British Government's complaint against him to the American Government. But the influence of the paper as also of the party increased, and contact was established with the revolutionaries in India.

During the First Great War the German Government was prepared to supply money and arms to the Indian revolutionaries. In 1914 a committee called the *German Union of Friendly India* was formed in Berlin with an influential German as President. In 1915 the committee—then without any German member—came to be known as the *Indian Independence Committee*. Its leaders included Birendra Nath Chattopadhyay, Bhupendra Nath Datta and Har Dayal. Apart from sending help to fellow workers in different countries the Committee formulated two grand plans: to organize invasion of Burma from Siam and China, and to send three ships carrying arms to India. Nothing however, was accomplished; but a precedent was set for appeal for foreign aid which was followed by Subhas Chandra Bose during the Second Great War.

The *Indian Independence Committee* and the German Government tried to strengthen the *Ghadar Party* by supplying money and arms. In 1917, immediately after the American declaration of war against Germany, the United States Government suppressed the *Ghadar Party*.

Rashbehari Bose found refuge in Japan and tried to send arms to India after 1915.

Estimate of revolutionaries

The militant nationalists borrowed their strategy—the use of violence—from different foreign sources, such as the Italian Carbonari, the Russian secret organizations, and the Irish Sinn Fein. But their idealism was based on India's ancient tradition. In explaining the origin of the revolutionary movement in Bengal the Report of the Sedition Committee (Rowlatt Committee) begins with Ramakrishna and Vivekananda.

Idealism—readiness to sacrifice life at the altar of the Motherland—was the revolutionaries' greatest contribution to India's freedom movement. There is no doubt that their strategy failed to bring freedom, just as the constitutional agitation of the 'Moderates' failed to bring the British colonial type of self-government. But their insistence on a direct, positive struggle found shape in the Gandhian strategy of *Satyagraha*. They never had any chance of success against the most highly organized and the most powerful imperial organization in the world. They had no all-India organization; even in the provinces they were often divided into rival groups. They lacked in resources: money and arms. As they had to work in the utmost secrecy they could not carry their message to the masses. But their self-sacrifice touched the national consciousness: it evoked admiration and respect. Freedom, they taught by their heroic acts, was to be won by struggle and sacrifice—not by quotations from Burke, John Stuart Mill and the Queen's Proclamation which embellished the speeches of the 'Moderates'. This was the lesson which shaped the national strategy in the Gandhian era although the emphasis was then shifted from violence to non-violence. The revolutionaries' idea of armed struggle with foreign aid was revived by Subhas Chandra Bose when British imperialism was weakened by Hitler and the international situation was more favourable to India than it had been during the First Great War.

4. MONTAGU-CHEILMSFORD REFORMS

Beginnings

Within two years of the introduction of the Morley-Minto Reforms the possibility of a structural change in the system of

government was envisaged by Lord Hardinge. In 1911 he recommended to the Secretary of State 'the recognition of provincial autonomy'. In 1912 the Government of India, acting upon the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Decentralization (1910), initiated a trend towards decentralization in finance and local self-government which would lead logically to some form of provincial autonomy. In 1914 the Congress asked the Government to implement Hardinge's recommendation on provincial autonomy. In 1916 the *Nineteen Members' Memorandum* and the *Congress-League Scheme* offered concrete proposals for a new Constitution. In 1916-17 the two *Home Rule Leagues* strengthened and radicalized the country's political aspirations.

Lord Chelmsford took charge as Viceroy in April 1916. He realized the urgency of granting political concessions and submitted some proposals to the Secretary of State, Sir Austen Chamberlain. The latter considered these proposals as inadequate, but he had to resign in July 1917 because the Government of Hardinge had mismanaged the Mesopotamia campaign. His successor, Edwin Samuel Montagu, believed that Indians should be given 'that higher opportunity of controlling their own destinies, not merely by Councils which cannot act, but by growing control of the Executive itself'.

Montagu's Declaration (1917)

Montagu made a historic Declaration in the House of Commons on 20 August 1917. It defined the goal of political evolution in India. The new policy was 'that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of 'self-governing institutions'. The end in view was 'the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire'.

This definition of India's political goal marked a new stage in the development of British policy. Political concessions had been granted in three principal instalments (the Indian Councils Acts of 1861, 1892 and 1909); but the goal to which they were intended to push the country had never been indicated.

Montagu-Chelmsford Report (1918)

Montagu came to India in November 1917 and, during a stay of several months, tried 'to ascertain all shades of (political) opinion', official and non-official. He also consulted some of

the Ruling Princes. Acting jointly with the Viceroy and in association with four other colleagues (including Bhupendra Nath Basu, a former 'Moderate' President of the Congress), he prepared a detailed *Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms* which was published in July 1918.

The Report contained elaborate proposals for constitutional reforms. Two hurdles were mentioned; the poverty and ignorance of the masses, and the 'cleavages' of religion, race and caste. These, however, were not to be allowed to obstruct the implementation of the Declaration of 20 August 1917.

The new policy required, according to the Report, that 'some measure of responsibility' should be given to 'representatives chosen by an electorate'. At the lowest level, 'there should be, as far as possible, complete control in local bodies and the largest possible independence for them of outside control'. At the provincial level, there should be 'the largest measure of independence, legislative, administrative, and financial, of the Government of India'; but such 'independence' must be 'compatible with the due discharge' by the Government of India of 'its own responsibilities' to the 'Home' Government and Parliament. This principle was to be applicable only to eight provinces having Legislative Councils (Madras, Bombay, Bengal, the United Provinces, Bihar and Orissa, the Punjab, the Central Provinces, Assam), and not the Chief Commissioner's provinces. Detailed provisions were suggested for implementation of this principle. As regards the Government of India, there would be no responsibility of the Executive to the Legislature. On the whole, the new system was intended to serve the following purposes: 'Authority, instead of being concentrated at the centre, was to be in large measure devolved on the provinces; the opportunities of the Central Legislature for influencing the Government of India were to be increased; the control of Parliament over the whole of Indian government was to be modified by marking out a portion of the provincial field in which it would be no longer exercised'.

Split in Congress (1918)

Official circles in India had grave misgivings about the 'philosophy of liberalism' which inspired the Report. The Congress, in a special session (August 1918), criticized the proposals as 'disappointing and unsatisfactory' and suggested important modifications. The 'Moderates', led by Surendra Nath Banerjee, supported the proposals in a separate Conference (November

1918). The ordinary session of the Congress, held a few months later (December 1918), reaffirmed the point of view of the special session with two important additions. This brought about the second split in the Congress: the 'Moderates', who had driven out the 'Extremists' in 1907, left the national organization in order to co-operate with the British Government.

Rowlatt Bills (1919)

Within less than a month of the ordinary session of the Congress the political situation was clouded by the publication of the Report of the *Sedition Committee* or the *Rowlatt Committee* (January 1919). In December 1917, when the reform proposals were being formulated, Chelmsford appointed a Committee, with Montagu's approval, to investigate the nature and extent of revolutionary activities and to suggest legislation, if necessary, to enable the Government to deal effectively with them. The President of the Committee, Sir Sydney Rowlatt, was a Judge of the King's Bench Division in London; his associates were the (British) Chief Justice of Bombay, an Indian Judge of the Madras High Court, a British Civilian serving in the United Provinces, and a Bengali Advocate of the Calcutta High Court. The Committee sat in camera and relied on the data supplied by the Government of India. In its Report (submitted to the Government of India in April 1918) it gave a comprehensive review of the activities of the militant nationalists and recommended special legislation, both punitive and preventive in character.

Two Bills based on the Rowlatt Committee's recommendations were placed before the Governor-General's Legislative Council in February 1919. These contained drastic provisions which virtually denied the protection of law to persons suspected of revolutionary activities. The Government used its official majority against strong opposition offered by every single non-official Indian member, elected and nominated. One of the Bills was dropped; the other (the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act) was passed in March 1919.

The agitation against the Rowlatt Bills accelerated the transformation of the Congress into a new body, with a new ideology and a new strategy under a new leader. The old 'Moderates' had already cut themselves off completely from the Congress. Mrs. Annie Besant joined them and played the role of 'a tower of strength' to the deputation to England led by Surendra Nath Banerjee in May 1919. Tilak, the leader of

the 'Extremists', had already left for England (September 1918) in connection with a libel case brought against him by Sir Valentine Chirol. The vacuum in Congress leadership was filled by a new-comer, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, whose political importance was recognized for the first time in the Congress session of December 1918.

Jallianwalla Bag Massacre (1919)

Gandhi's protest against the Rowlatt Bills took the form of a *Satyagraha* (April 1919) which, however, was virtually suspended within a few days. About the same time events in the Punjab moved towards a tragic climax. The Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, had already earned notoriety as an oppressive administrator. Gandhi's *Satyagraha* movement provoked a *hartal* in many parts of the Punjab, and violent disturbances took place. The Provincial Government treated this as a 'rebellion' and suppressed it by 'such measures as no civilized Government in modern times had ever been known to take against its own subjects'.

The most gruesome incident took place at Amritsar (13 April 1919). General Dyer ordered his troops to fire upon a very large crowd which had assembled for a public meeting at a park known as Jallianwalla Bag. His purpose, as he declared later, was 'to strike terror into the whole of the Punjab'. The death roll, according to the official estimate, was about 500; but most probably it was about 1,000. Martial law was proclaimed in several districts. In different parts of the Punjab atrocities were committed on the plea of maintaining law and order.

Rabindranath Tagore, who had attained international eminence in literature as a Nobel Prize winner, relinquished the Kinghood conferred upon him by the British Government to 'give voice to the protest (as he wrote to the Viceroy) of the millions of my countrymen surprised into a dark anguish of terror'. Sir Sankaran Nair, a former 'Moderate' President of the Congress, resigned his Membership of the Viceroy's Executive Council (July 1919) as a protest against the continuance of martial law for an unnecessarily long period.

An Enquiry Committee appointed by the Congress reported in March 1920, condemning the Punjab Government for the atrocities and the Government of India for 'inaction, if not active participation'. Another Enquiry Committee was appointed by the Government of India with Lord Hunter as Chair-

man, four British members and three Indian members. It submitted two Reports (May 1920), one signed by the Chairman and four British members, the other by the three Indian members. Both reports agreed that the *Satyagraha* movement was responsible for the disturbances; but they differed on several important points, including Dyer's conduct and the necessity or justification of martial law. The 'Home' Government removed Dyer from active service and absolved O'Dwyer and Chelmsford from all guilt. But the House of Lords passed a resolution (which had no practical effect) deploring Dyer's removal from the Army.

The Government of India Act (1919)

Meanwhile the Government of India Act (1919) had been passed by Parliament. The first elections under the Act were held in November 1920. The Act came into operation on 1 January 1921.

Montagu described the new constitutional system as 'a bridge between government by Parliament and government by the representatives of the people of India'. It was 'a transitional stage in the development of self-government'. This, indeed, was implicit in Montagu's Declaration of 20 August 1917 which was incorporated in the Act as its preamble. It promised 'progressive realisation of responsible government'. It warned that progress could 'only be achieved by successive stages', and that 'the time and manner of each advance can be determined only by Parliament'. At the same time it recognized that 'substantial steps' in the direction of implementation of the new policy 'should now be taken'. These 'steps' would have two aspects: 'the gradual development of self-governing institutions in the provinces', and 'the largest measure of independence from the Government of India' for the provinces which was compatible with the due discharge by the former of its own responsibilities. The changes were applicable only to 'British India' which was to remain an 'integral part of the Empire'; the Princely States were not included in the constitutional scheme.

Act of 1919: Provincial Government

The principal changes introduced by the Act of 1919 related to the provinces.

Provision was made for classification of central and provincial subjects 'for the purpose of distinguishing the functions of the Local Governments and Local Legislatures from the func-

tions of the Governor-General in Council and the Indian (i.e., central) Legislature'. In the Devolution Rules framed under the Act 45 central subjects (e.g., defence, external relations, relations with Princely States, railways, posts and telegraphs, major ports, customs, currency and exchange, census and statistics, criminal law, etc.) and 50 provincial subjects were enumerated. The provincial subjects were divided into two groups : 'reserved' (e.g., police, prisons, sources of provincial revenue, irrigation, land-revenue administration, administration of justice, industrial relations, etc.), and 'transferred' (e.g., local self-government, medical administration, education, public works, agriculture, etc.). All matters not included among provincial subjects were central subjects.

This classification of subjects was 'the essential novelty of the Act.' It marked the transition from the process of centralization initiated by the Regulating Act of 1773 to the adoption of the federal principle under the Government of India Act of 1935. For the first time since the Charter Act of 1833 the provinces secured a sphere of activities in which they could function more or less freely.

The arrangements relating to provincial finance were based on the Report of the Meston Committee (March 1920). On the whole, the provinces secured 'a statutory financial position' as also 'a substantial measure of financial autonomy'. They were no longer required to depend upon 'doles' granted by the Government of India under the quinquennial settlement system. They secured a financial identity which was a necessary complement to their constitutional identity.

At first the benefit of reforms was extended to eight provinces : Madras, Bombay, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the United Provinces, the Punjab, the Central Provinces, Assam. In 1923 Burma, and in 1932 the North-West Frontier Province, were brought within this category. The 'smaller tracts' like Delhi, Coorg and Ajmer-Merwara were 'left entirely' under the control of the Government of India.

All heads of provinces received the common designation of Governor, but there were differences in their status and emoluments. However, they exercised almost identical powers. These powers were extensive and were operative in administrative, financial and legislative fields.

There was 'dualism' in the provincial Executive. In the administration of the 'reserved' subjects the Governor was to

be aided by the Members of his Executive Council who were not responsible to the Legislative Council. In the administration of the 'transferred' subjects he was to be aided by Ministers who were to be appointed by him from among the elected members of the Legislative Council and were to remain responsible to it. The Ministers' advice was normally binding on the Governor; he could overrule them if 'he saw sufficient cause to dissent from their opinion'. This system was known as 'Dyarchy'. The Governor was expected to 'act as a strong unifying force' between the Executive Councillors and the Ministers.

The size of the Legislative Councils in the provinces was considerably enlarged. The system of Separate Electorates was continued in the case of the Muslims and newly created in favour of the Sikhs, the Indian Christians, the Europeans and the Anglo-Indians. Representation by nomination was retained, but every Legislative Council had an elected majority.

The Legislative Council had the general power to make laws for the 'peace and good government' of the province, but it was subject to restrictions of different kinds. 'In finance and in legislation the freedom left to the Provincial Legislatures was very narrowly limited', for several special powers were vested in the Governor as also in the Governor-General.

Act of 1919: Central Government

The Montagu-Chelmsford Report recorded the clear opinion that 'pending the development of responsible government, the Government of India must remain responsible only to Parliament'. But it was desirable to make the Imperial Legislative Council more truly representative of Indian opinion, and to give that opinion greater opportunities of acting on the Government'. Thus the scope of the reforms was limited to the legislative field; there was no change in the Executive.

Under the Act of 1919 the Central Legislature had two chambers: the Council of State with a small elected majority, and the Legislative Assembly with a large elected majority. The former was constituted as a conservative body and was intended to serve as a brake upon the latter.

The general legislative power of the Central Legislature covered all central subjects as also some matters falling within the scope of provincial subjects. It could vote on the budget and reduce or reject any demand. But there were some restrictions on its legislative and financial powers. The Members of

the Viceroy's Executive Council were not responsible to it.

The executive functions of the Government of India belonged to three categories. First, it had the power of superintendence, direction and control over the Provincial Governments in respect of all 'reserved' subjects and over specified matters in respect of 'transferred' subjects. Second, it was responsible for the administration of all areas in British India which lay outside the scope of the reforms, i.e., the territories under the Chief Commissioners and the 'Backward Tracts'. Thirdly, the paramountcy of the Crown over the Princely States was exercised, in practice, by the Governor-General through the Political Department of the Government of India.

Conclusion

The changes introduced by the Act of 1919 were not very important steps towards self-government, but they were important in principle because they recognized that responsible government was not an unrealisable dream. They marked a clear departure from Lord Morley's view that 'a Parliamentary system' was not to be India's political goal. 'The repudiation of parliamentary government was itself repudiated' by the Act of 1919. The framers of the Act, it is said, intended to 'disturb the placid pathetic contentment' of the Indian people and to draw them towards a small experiment in limited self government in the provincial sphere so that they might advance gradually to the ultimate political goal.

There was, of course, no 'placid pathetic contentment' in India, as the history of the Congress, the programme of the Muslim League, as also tribal risings and trade union activities proved. Conciliation of India was an imperial necessity. The Act of 1919 broadened the electorate and thereby brought a larger section of the people into direct contact with the political process. It provided for partial transfer of power to the electorate through the system of Dyarchy. It prepared the ground for federalism through recognition of the identity of the provinces as administrative and financial units. Admittedly these concessions were crippled by restrictions and failed to satisfy the rapidly developing national aspirations. But they marked a new stage in British policy.

CHAPTER 8

THE GANDHIAN MOVEMENTS (1919-34)

I. EMERGENCE OF GANDHI

Gandhi in South Africa

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, known as *Mahatma* Gandhi for his great role in India's struggle for freedom, was born on 2 October 1869 at Porbandar in Saurashtra (Gujarat) in a well-to-do family. He proceeded to England in 1888, and returned to India as a Barrister-at-law in 1891. He failed as a practising lawyer both at Rajkot and in Bombay. In 1893 he proceeded to Natal in South Africa as the lawyer of a firm of Porbandar Muslims. There he was deeply shocked by the political and social disabilities which were imposed by law, administrative measures and social usages of the Europeans upon the Indian residents. But he remained loyal to British rule, organized voluntary service to the British Government during the Zulu rebellion (in Natal) in 1906, and declared that 'the British Empire existed for the welfare of the world'. However, he founded a political association known as the Natal Indian Congress as also a newspaper called *Indian Opinion* with a view to educating Indians in political matters and giving publicity to their grievances.

In 1906 a law was passed in the Transvaal requiring Indians to register themselves and to carry passes. Gandhi offered resistance to this humiliating law and used for the first time the weapon of non-violent resistance which came to be known later as *Satyagraha*. The same political strategy was adopted against a law passed in 1907, preventing Indians from entering into the Transvaal. In 1913 a judicial decision made illegal all Indian marriages in South Africa which were not registered and performed in accordance with Christian rites. *Satyagraha* was offered. Gandhi was arrested and sentenced to imprisonment for nine months. The Government offered a compromise; the Indian Relief Act was passed in 1914.

Gandhi's activities in South Africa 'transformed him from a shy and youthful pleader with no experience of public life into a mature idealist and leader'. Through co-operation with the Muslims he realized the political importance of Hindu-Muslim unity. Contact with the low-caste Hindus taught him that

untouchability was a social and political evil. Experience of white men's ways of life and attitude towards black men disillusioned him about Western industrial civilization. In his book *Hind Swaraj*, written in 1909, he interpreted *Swaraj* (self-rule) in a broad sense. It was 'a quality or state of life which could only exist where Indians followed their traditional civilization uncorrupted by modern innovations'. He enunciated his social ideal as follows: 'India's salvation consists in unlearning what she has learnt during the last 50 years or so. The railways, telegraphs, hospitals, lawyers, doctors, and such like have all to go, and the so-called upper class have to learn to live consciously and religiously and deliberately the simple life of a peasant'. He felt 'an increasing disenchantment with the British Empire in political terms' because its policies were not in conformity with the ideals of the British Constitution; but he did not 'turn against the British *Raj* as such'. Immediately after his return to India in January 1915 he proclaimed his loyalty to the British.

Satyagraha

The word *Satyagraha*—a combination of two words, *satya* (truth) and *agraha* (adherence, holding fast)—means 'holding on to truth'. It was a substitute for what Gandhi himself originally termed 'Passive Resistance'. Later he said that *Satyagraha* and 'Passive Resistance' differed 'as the North Pole from the South'. The latter was 'conceived as a weapon of the weak, and did not exclude the use of physical force and violence for the purpose of gaining one's end; whereas the former was conceived as a weapon of the strongest and excluded the use of violence in any shape or form'. Love had no place in 'Passive Resistance', but *Satyagraha* was 'the law of love, the way of love for all'. 'With infinite trust in human nature and in its inherent goodness' the *Satyagrahi* seeks the conversion of the opponent by self-suffering. *Satyagraha* did not mean 'meek submission to the will of the evil-doer'; it meant 'the pitting of one soul against the will of the tyrant'. Being 'a moral—not a physical—weapon', it 'raised political warfare to a higher plane'. Gandhi claimed to be 'a practical idealist, not a visionary'. In his view, 'the religion of non-violence (*ahimsa*) is not meant merely for the *rishis* and saints; it is meant for the common people as well'. *Satyagraha* had 'two offshoots, non-cooperation and civil resistance'.

The idea of non-violence was drawn from Vaishnavism.

Brought up in Gujarat, an area steeped in the Vaishnava tradition, Gandhi had been deeply influenced in childhood by literature expounding belief in the power of 'suffering'. In South Africa he studied Tolstoy's books, including *The Gospels in Brief*, *What to do?*, and 'realized more and more the infinite possibilities of universal love'. He carried on correspondence with Tolstoy till the latter's death in 1910. In his last letter to Gandhi, Tolstoy described 'non-resistance' as 'in reality nothing else but the discipline of love undeformed by false-interpretation'. While in jail in South Africa Gandhi read Thoreau's essay on civil disobedience.

Gandhi : early activities in India (1915-17)

On receipt of instructions from G. K. Gokhale, Gandhi returned to India from South Africa in January 1915. Instead of immediately entering Indian politics, he 'spent 1915 and much of 1916 touring India, visiting places as far apart as Sind and Rangoon, Benares and Madras, in order to get to know his homeland' and to make himself known to his countrymen. His only excursion into politics was his demand (October 1915) for the abolition of the system of indentured labour for manual work outside India. No *Satyagraha* was started because the Government of India abolished the system before the date fixed by him (31 July 1917).

His constructive work began with the foundation of the Sabarmati *Ashram* at Ahmedabad in May 1915. At that stage he did 'not lay so much store by agitation as by working for the moral, material and economic regeneration of his countrymen'. He believed that 'once people made themselves fit by character and capacity the grant of privileges would follow as a matter of course'. Till the beginning of 1917 Gandhi was 'more of a freelance preacher and social worker than a recognized politician'. Gokhale was his 'closest ally'; after his death (February 1915) he was refused admission to the Servants of India Society which Gokhale had founded in 1905 to educate the backward and to organize political work, B. G. Tilak opposed him because he did not publicly support the Home Rule League.

Gandhi : politics of Satyagraha (Champaran, 1917)

It was through involvement in three local disputes—in Champaran (in North Bihar), in Kaira (in Gujarat), and in Ahmedabad—in 1917-18 that Gandhi emerged as an influen-

tial political leader. In Champaran he took up the cause of peasants against landlords, in Kaira that of farmers against revenue-officials, and in Ahmedabad that of mill-workers against mill-owners. In every case the strategy was *Satyagraha*. In every case the struggle developed into confrontation with the Government.

In Champaran—a Permanent Settlement area—there were large *zamindari* estates under rich and influential landlords. Most of the villages were leased out by the *zamindars* to *thikadars* of whom the most influential group was European indigo-planters. Though the planters were—in law—temporary tenure-holders, they not only realized rent from the peasants but also exercised civil and criminal jurisdiction over them. The result was the reduction of the peasantry, in the words of Gandhi, to an 'abjectly helpless' condition.

The economic impact of the First Great War, particularly the rise in prices, added to the normal difficulties of the indigo-cultivating peasantry, such as compulsion for cultivation of indigo, payment of low prices by the planters, use of force and fraud by them, etc. Champaran was ripe for agitation when Gandhi arrived there at the invitation of a local politician (April 1917). Through tours in rural areas he established direct contact with ordinary people and talked about their concerns in the language which they understood. This was a novel political technique; it had never been practised by the educated leaders of the Congress. For the first time the peasants were drawn into political agitation under a new type of leadership.

An attempt by the local officials to extern him from the Tirhut Division (in which Champaran was situated) failed because the Bihar Government disapproved of such action. But the incident became a *cause celebre*, and there were loud protests against the Government's policy from the leading papers in the Bombay Presidency and in Bengal. For the first time in India Gandhi was displaying that magnetic personality which was to draw multitudes to him, and to earn him the title of *Mahatma* and the nickname of *Bapu*.

Under pressure from the Government of India, the Government of Bihar appointed a Committee of Enquiry (June 1917). The recommendations of the Committee were implemented, partly by the Champaran Agrarian Act of 1917, and partly by executive orders. These included several concessions and pres-

cription of limits for enhancement rents. It was a compromise which satisfied neither the peasants nor the planters, and harmony was not established in their relations. But the political result of the campaign 'was of immense significance in Gandhi's career'; it gave him 'an all-India public reputation'.

Gandhi: politics of Satyagraha (Kaira, 1917-18)

Kaira, a district in Gujarat in the Bombay Presidency, was an agricultural area with sizeable small holdings. Here the damage caused to the crops during the 1917-18 season by heavy rains, as also distress caused by war-time conditions, led the peasants to start an agitation for relief from the land-revenue demand. Gandhi took up leadership. An appeal to the Government (December 1917-March 1918) was followed by *Satyagraha* (March-June 1918). As in Champaran, so in Kaira, he toured the villages, and encouraged the *Satyagrahis* (who numbered more than 2,000) to continue non-violent resistance. Among his principal associates were Vallabhbhai Patel (who emerged into political importance on this occasion and later played a very important role in the struggle for freedom) and Mahadev Desai (who later became his private secretary). Patel, a Barrister-at-law, became a link between the peasantry and the educated classes.

The *Satyagraha* in Kaira failed in so far as 'it led neither to an independent enquiry nor to the suspension of revenue collection which Gandhi had first demanded'. But 'it showed *Satyagraha* in its true colours as a very powerful weapon because it was so simple and so versatile (and) could be used virtually in any situation of conflict, by literate and illiterate'. It added fresh glamour to the public image which Gandhi had created for himself in Champaran. It created a solid Gandhian base for non-violence in the Anand-Borsad area.

Gandhi: politics of Satyagraha (Ahmedabad, 1918)

In Ahmedabad, a big industrial city, Gandhi organized a movement which was directed against Indian mill-owners, not Government officials (February-August 1918). In contrast to Champaran and Kaira, where he took up the cause of the peasantry, in Ahmedabad he led the urban mill-workers who demanded a substantial rise in their wages. After failure of negotiations with the mill-owners he announced his intention of fasting until a settlement was made. Afraid that he would fast to death, they agreed to a settlement which 'saved face for

both parties'. The workers secured a considerable wage increase. It was a demonstration of the success of the method of peaceful arbitration in industrial disputes. It was also 'the forerunner of Gandhi's hunger strikes in all-India politics'. For the first time he recognized that *Satyagraha* had a place for fasting, as part of the self-purification and suffering which was intended to win over the opponent'.

Gandhi: politics of Satyagraha (Rowlatt Satyagraha, 1919)

During the last two years of the first Great War (1917-18) Gandhi played the role of a 'part-time political protagonist'. He did not formally enter 'institutional politics' though he maintained close contact with the Congress and the Home Rule League as also with the Muslim leaders, Mohammad Ali and his brother Shaukat Ali, and pleaded for their release when they were interned by the Government. He was loyal to the British Government; he did not think that the *Satyagraha* movements led by him in Champaran, Kaira and Ahmedabad were incompatible with it. He conducted a personal recruiting campaign for military service, particularly in Bihar and Gujarat — 'a strange phenomenon in one who preached non-violence'.

After the Montagu-Chelmsford Report was published (July 1918) Gandhi stated that he had not studied the proposals in detail, but in his view they 'deserved sympathetic handling rather than a summary rejection'. When the 'Moderates' seceded from the Congress on the question of acceptance of the Montagu-Chelmsford Scheme, he declined to join either group, 'ploughing a lonely furrow'. It was the repressive policy of the British Government which dragged him away from the shell of political isolation and led him to 'make a bid for all-India leadership'.

The Rowlatt Bills (February-March 1919) provoked from Gandhi a strong protest which developed into a *Satyagraha* (April 1919). It was basically different from the *Satyagrahas* in Champaran, Kaira and Ahmedabad which had been launched in selected localities for redress of local grievances. It gave a sharp edge to a countrywide movement launched by the Congress as a protest against a national grievance which focussed public attention on a national issue. After the suspension of the movement he wrote to Secretary of State Montagu: 'This retention of Rowlatt legislation in the teeth of universal opposition is an affront to the nation. Its repeal is necessary to appease national honour'.

The first stage of the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* was marked by 'preparation and deliberation'. It took the form of volunteers courting arrest by formal defiance of law. Its main centres were in the Bombay Presidency—particularly the cities of Bombay and Ahmedabad. The second phase began with Gandhi's decision to launch a *hartal*. He found support from some radical Home Leaguers; but the Congress was not yet interested in agitational politics. An all-India *hartal* took place on 6 April 1919. After his announcement of plans for civil disobedience his movement was restricted to the Bombay Presidency. This was followed by mass protest and mob violence in Bombay, Ahmedabad and several other towns in Gujarat. Then came the Jallianwalla Bag Massacre (12 April 1919). From mid-April the *Satyagraha* lost momentum. On 18 April 1919 Gandhi suspended the civil disobedience part of the *Satyagraha* programme. He confessed that he had committed a 'Himalayan miscalculation', for he had offered civil disobedience to people who were not fully qualified by the practice of *Satyagraha* to adopt it. As an act of expiation he observed a three-day fast. But *Satyagraha* continued in a limited form, and he educated the public in its ideal through his journals, *Young India* (in English) and *Nāvajīvan* (in Gujarati).

As a political campaign the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* was an open failure. Though intended to be non-violent, it erupted into violence. It failed to secure the repeal of the Rowlatt Act. The sudden suspension of civil disobedience was widely resented by the politically alert classes. But it brought to focus Gandhi's prominence as an all-India leader. 'His personality, his ideology, his novel approach to politics, and his technique of *Satyagraha* enabled his campaign to become the focus for multifarious local grievances and gave him access to the power they generated'. But to give form and content to this development he had to enter 'institutional politics' and fight for organizational leadership. This he did at the Amritsar session of the Congress (December 1919). There he opposed the country's leading politicians 'in their own citadel' and scored immediate success in seizing overall political ascendancy. His political success after the failure of the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* was a remarkable testimony to his personal magnetism, the novelty of his political technique, and the impact of his idealism on the masses.

In May 1919 the Governor of Bombay wrote to Secretary of State Montagu: 'The proper place for a saint is heaven, not the Bombay Presidency, and he is paradoxically trying to make it a hell'. The making of the Bombay Presidency—and the rest of India—a 'hell' was Gandhi's way of leading his country to Swaraj.

2. KHILAFAT MOVEMENT (1919-23)

Mohammad Ali

Mohammad Ali (1878-1931), an eminent Muslim leader of the second and third decades of the present century, was an Oxford graduate in Modern History. But his mind was dominated by medieval Islamic orthodoxy and he was a Pan-Islamist to the core. He looked upon the corrupt and weak Ottoman Empire as the sole preserver of Islamic influence. In his view Islam was theocratic and 'supernationalist'; it was, therefore, necessarily opposed to secular nationalism sponsored by the Congress.

Mohammad Ali's political career began before the First Great War with his editorship of the *Comrade*, an English weekly intended for educated Muslims. He was a critic of the Aligarh School of Muslim politicians who linked the destiny of the Indian Muslims with the patronage of the British rulers. He did not believe in the 'fiction about the identity of interests' between the Hindus and the Muslims; he thought that the two communities 'dwell apart in thought and sentiment'. This meant acceptance of the 'two-nation theory'.

Khilafat Movement

The Pan-Islamic sentiments of the Indian Muslims developed into the Khilafat Movement after Turkey's defeat in the First Great War when it appeared that the policy of the victorious British was to lop off the European and Arab portions from the Ottoman Empire. In January 1918 the British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, gave a public assurance that the Allies were 'not fighting to deprive Turkey of the rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor and Thrace'. This assurance was violated by the terms of the Armistice (November 1918). The virtual abolition of Caliphate was proposed, and non-Muslim (Christian) rule was to be imposed on the holy places of Islam in West Asia.

This is the background of the Khilafat Movement: a move-

ment of protest against the Allies, particularly Britain, in support of the Ottoman Caliph. The wounded feelings of the Indian Muslims led them to organize a Central Khilafat Committee (November 1919). In the same month an All-India Khilafat Conference met in Delhi and elected Gandhi as its President. Among the most prominent leaders of the movement were the Ali brothers—Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali—who were released from internment in December 1919, and M. A. Ansari.

The peace terms imposed by the Allies on Turkey were published in May 1920 and formalized in the treaty of Sevres signed three months later. Meanwhile the Khilafatists had formulated a three-point programme. First, the Ottoman Caliph should retain his empire with sufficient temporal power to defend Islam. Secondly, the traditional centre of Islam—the Arab lands—should remain under Muslim rule. Thirdly, the Sultan should be the warden of the Muslim sacred places.

Gandhi and Khilafat Movement

Ever since its birth the Congress had confined itself to political and economic issues affecting all sections of the Indian people; it had scrupulously avoided involvement in religious matters. An organization claiming to represent all religious communities in their secular activities could not appropriately identify itself with a religious movement which had no concern whatsoever with any non-Muslim group. But Gandhi took an entirely different view. He wrote that the Congress plea for Hindu-Muslim unity 'would be an empty phrase if the Hindus hold aloof from the Mohammedans when their vital interests are at stake'. His 'alliance' with the Muslims, he said, was intended to 'achieve a threefold end': 'to obtain justice in the face of odds with the method of *Satyagraha*', 'to secure Mohammedan friendship for the Hindus and thereby internal peace also', 'to transform ill-will into affection for the British and their Constitution'.

In March 1920 Gandhi issued a statement recommending Non-co-operation and warning the British Government that it 'cannot expect a meek submission by us to an unjust usurpation of rights which to Muslims means a matter of life and death'. As a matter of fact the continuation of Ottoman rule, which was one of the principal claims of the Khilafatists, could not be a 'matter of life and death' to the Muslims of India. The retention of the Caliphate as a symbol of Islamic unity might

have some emotional significance; but when Kemal Pasha abolished this anachronistic institution during the years 1922-24 in two stages, the Muslims in India and in the Muslim countries made no protest. Gandhi supported a movement which was not a struggle for any political right, not even for the satisfaction of a real spiritual need.

History of Khilafat Movement

The observance of 'Khilafat Day' on 17 October 1919 on an all-India scale launched the movement on an imposing scale. At the Amritsar session of the Congress (December 1919) there were consultations between the leaders of the Congress and the principal Khilafatists. A deputation of the latter waited upon Chelmsford in January 1920 and presented an address which was signed by eminent Hindu leaders such as Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, Madan Mohan Malaviya and Swami Shraddhananda. The Viceroy's reply was disappointing. Another Khilafat deputation met Lloyd George in London in March 1920, but the Prime Minister rejected its plea for continuation of Ottoman rule in the Arab countries.

By advocating Non-co-operation as the technique of the Khilafat Movement Gandhi created difficulties for its leaders. He was sorry to find that those who supported his idea were prompted by political calculation—anxiety to ensure the co-operation of the Congress,—not by faith in *Satyagraha*. 'Tension between Gandhi's ideal of *Satyagraha* and the Khilafat leaders' adoption of it as a political technique remained a constant feature of the Khilafat Movement as long as the Muslim leaders needed Gandhi as a guarantee of Hindu support'.

The publication of the Allies' terms of peace with Turkey (May 1920) was followed by the publication of the Hunter Committee's Report on the British atrocities at Jallianwalla Bag and other places in the Punjab. Gandhi failed 'to secure a complete communal alliance' for Non-co-operation, but he played a skilful and effective 'role of link-man between the two communities'. The Central Khilafat Committee organized an all-India general strike on 1 August 1920. The Khilafat Movement gathered momentum because many *pirs* and *mullahs* came forward to provoke the illiterate Muslim masses to agitate in the name of religion. Gandhi returned to the Viceroy all medals which he had been awarded by the British Government for his war services. This was done, he wrote, 'in pursuance of the scheme of Non-co-operation inaugurated

in connection with the Khilafat Movement'. A large number of Muslims of Sind and the North-West Frontier Province undertook a *Hijrat* (migration) to Afghanistan, as they felt that they could no longer live under non-Muslim rule in India. But the Afghan Government used force to prevent their entry and the intending migrants suffered indescribable miseries.

At the special session of the Congress held in Calcutta in September 1920 a resolution in favour of Non-co-operation was passed at Gandhi's instance despite opposition from eminent leaders like Chitta Ranjan Das, Bepin Chandra Pal, Annie Besant and Madan Mohan Malaviya. Non-co-operation was to be a protest against two 'wrongs': the British Government's attitude towards the Khilafat issue and its 'failure to protect the innocent people of the Punjab and punish officers guilty of unsoldierly and barbarous behaviour towards them'. In Gandhi's scheme the Khilafat issue had priority over the Punjab issue. He believed that he was 'uniting Hindus and Muslims' and going to prove 'that a great power based on brute force will have to submit to a simple-looking thing (i.e., *Satyagraha*)'.

The joint movement was weakened by growing tension in Gandhi's relations with the Ali brothers. When Mohammad Ali 'openly spoke of possible Muslim assistance to an invading Afghan force Gandhi was hard pressed to soothe the Hindus'. In July 1921 the All-India Khilafat Conference passed a resolution, supported by the Ali brothers, that it was wrong for Muslims to serve in the British army. They were arrested in September 1921. Their removal to prison brought to the surface the growing discontent among the Muslims at the control of the Non-co-operation Movement (of which the Khilafat Movement was a part) by non-Muslims.

Gandhi suspended the Non-co-operation Movement after the Chauri Chaura incident (which was entirely unconnected with the Khilafat Movement) in February 1922. He was arrested in March 1922. 'God saved the Mahatma's face'; the British Government 'rescued him from the embarrassment of having to admit that the Hindu-Muslim alliance which he had seen as the precondition of Swraaj was not a rock but a quicksand'.

A few months after Gandhi's arrest the Grand National Assembly of Turkey took the first step towards the abolition of the Caliphate by depriving it of its temporal power (Novem-

ber 1922). The total abolition of the Caliphate followed in March 1924. It effectively removed the issue from Indian politics.

Results of Khilafat Movement.

The Khilafat Movement secured no positive advantage for the Indian Muslims, for it could not pressurize Britain to make any concession to the Ottoman Caliph. In 1922-24 it became clear that they had been fighting for a shadow, for the Turkish Muslims abolished the Caliphate and the Arabs remained indifferent.

The history of the Khilafat Movement, as also its aftermath, proved that Gandhi's assessment of Muslim psychology was utterly wrong. The Khilafatists did not share his faith in *Satyagraha*; they acquiesced in his philosophy only so long as his political role served their purpose of securing Hindu co-operation. They did not share his urge for Hindu-Muslim unity. Even before his arrest the Moplah rebellion in Malabar (1921) foreshadowed a breakdown in the anti-British alliance between the Khilafatists and the Congress. The Moplahs declared a *jihad* (holy war) against the British Government, but 'the main thrust of Moplah ferocity was borne by the luckless Hindus'. The Khilafat Conference at Cocanada (1923) adopted a resolution, moved by its President Shaukat Ali, urging provision for Moplahs who had suffered during the 'rebellion', but there was no reference to provision for the Hindu victims of Moplah violence.

The hastily improvised bridge built by Gandhi and Mohammad Ali collapsed completely in 1923. As soon as the Khilafat issue lost its importance Mohammad Ali left the Congress (of which he had been President) and 'sank to the level of the cheapest, fanatical and most ill-informed of Muslim *mullahs*'. He declared Gandhi to be worse as a man than 'the worst Muslim sinner and criminal'. He advised the Muslims to keep themselves aloof from Gandhi's Civil Disobedience Movement.

The breach between the Congress and the Khilafatists was inevitable, for there was really neither any common interest nor any common outlook. Jawaharlal Nehru described the Khilafat Movement as 'a strange mixture of nationalism and politics and religion and mysticism and fanaticism'. Behind that 'nationalism', he wrote, was a mixture of 'Hindu nationalism and Muslim nationalism partly looking beyond the fron-

tiers of India'. Such a 'mixture' of incompatibles is a glaring example of Gandhi's failure to make a realistic approach to the Hindu-Muslim problem.

By summoning the *ulama* to rally under the Khilafat banner Mohammad Ali strengthened the impact of religious slogans on Muslim politics. This was largely responsible for the communal riots during the post-Khilafat years. Of the leading Khilafatists only Maulana Abul Kalam Azad remained a firm nationalist and played a vital role in the Congress for many years. For this he paid a heavy price : he lost political influence in his own community as also its recognition for his mastery of Islamic lore.

3. NON-CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT (1920-22)

Calcutta Congress (1920)

The question of acceptance of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms was the principal issue before the Amritsar session of the Congress (December 1919) presided over by Motilal Nehru. The main resolution, moved by Chitta Ranjan Das, virtually meant rejection of the Reforms ; but it was amended by a resolution moved by Gandhi. In its final form the resolution committed the Congress to 'so work the Reforms as to secure an early establishment of full responsible Government'.

At Amritsar Chitta Ranjan Das 'was inclined to obstruction and rejection—shall we say non-co-operation? Gandhi was there as the apostle of co-operation'. A few months later—at the special session of the Congress held in Calcutta (September 1920) under the Presidentship of Lajpat Rai—their position was reversed. A month earlier (1 August 1920) Tilak had passed away. The Congress 'adopted the policy of progressive Non-co-operation' on the basis of a resolution moved by Gandhi. Chitta Ranjan Das, Bepin Chandra Pal, Annie Besant, Madan Mohan Malaviya and Mohammad Ali Jinnah stood in opposition. The Khilafatists, led by Mohammed Ali, supported Gandhi. Among the eminent Hindu leaders only Motilal Nehru followed him.

Gandhi's proposal was intended to secure remedies for two 'wrongs' : (1) the failure of the Indian and Imperial Governments 'in their duty towards Mussalmans of India' on the Khilafat question ; (2) the failure of both these Governments 'to

protect the innocent people of the Punjab and punish officers guilty of unsoldierly and barbarous behaviour towards them'. Priority was given to the Khilafat issue.

Gandhi laid down an elaborate programme : (1) surrender of titles and honorary offices and resignation from nominated seats in local bodies ; (2) refusal to attend official and non-official functions ; (3) 'gradual withdrawal of children' from officially controlled schools and colleges ; (4) 'gradual boycott of British courts by lawyers and litigants' ; (5) 'refusal on the part of the military, clerical and labouring classes to offer themselves as recruits for service in Mesopotamia' ; (6) boycott of elections to the Legislative Councils by candidates and voters ; (7) boycott of foreign goods. National schools and colleges were to be established. Private arbitration courts were to be set up for the settlement of private disputes.

Nagpur Congress (1920)

The Calcutta resolution was ratified four months later at the Nagpur session of the Congress (December 1920). Chitta Ranjan Das changed his mind and joined Gandhi in supporting Non-co-operation ; but the other critics of the new creed—Bepin Chandra Pal, Annie Besant, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Mohammad Ali Jinnah—continued their opposition.

Two changes were made in the constitution of the Congress. The goal of the Congress in the existing constitution was 'self-government within the British Empire'. These words were replaced by the word *Swaraj* which Gandhi interpreted as 'self-government within the Empire, if possible, outside, if necessary'. The nature of 'self-government' was not indicated. Secondly, the method to be followed by the Congress in achieving its goal was stated in the existing constitution as 'constitutional means'. These words were substituted by 'all peaceful and legitimate means'. This change provided scope for disobedience of law (which was not 'constitutional') and adoption of methods of resistance which were politically and morally 'legitimate' but 'peaceful'.

The programme adopted in Calcutta was supplemented by a constructive programme which had three principal features: (1) promotion of *Swadeshi*, particularly hand-spinning and weaving ; (2) removal of untouchability among the Hindus ; (3) promotion of Hindu-Muslim unity.

History of Non-co-operation Movement (1920-22)

The Non-co-operation Movement had a brief history and extremely limited success. It was actually initiated by Gandhi on 1 August 1920 on his own authority before the matter was placed before the Calcutta Congress a month later. For him Non-co-operation was a matter of 'unshakable faith', and although he recognized the Congress as 'the mouth-piece of the nation', he could not 'wait for its pronouncements'. The 'pronouncements' in Calcutta and Nagpur were completely in his favour, and by the beginning of 1921 the Congress citadel was fully under his control. At the Ahmedabad session (December 1921) the Congress declared its 'fixed determination to continue the programme of non-violent Non-co-operation with greater vigour than hitherto'. Early in 1922 Gandhi decided to launch a no-tax campaign at Bardoli in Gujarat and declared in a letter to the Viceroy that 'aggressive civil disobedience' would be 'taken up only when the Government refuses to yield to the people of India'. But an incident of mob violence against the police at Chauri Chaura, a village in the United Provinces, led him to call off the Non-co-operation Movement (February 1922). Realizing that his position had been weakened, the Government arrested him (March 1922) and he was sentenced to six years' imprisonment.

During the struggle the principal weapon used against the British Government was boycott—of the Legislatures, of law courts, and of educational institutions. As Congress candidates withdrew from the electoral contest, non-Congress candidates captured the new Councils constituted under the Government of India Act, 1919. The Congress was not strong enough to prevent the voters from casting their votes. As a result, the Councils functioned and there was no breakdown of the new constitutional machinery, although it could be argued that they were not truly representative bodies. Law courts were not boycotted by the lawyers as a class—despite the example set by Motilal Nehru and Chitta Ranjan Das—or by litigants. The surrender of titles and resignation from Government service were negligible. Boycott of the official visit of the Prince of Wales (November 1920) to inaugurate the new Legislative Councils was a success, but it could yield little political dividend. Boycott of schools and colleges was a failure. To Gandhi's regret the people failed to remain non-violent in

several parts of the country. The Government took repressive measures to crush the Non-co-operation Movement.

The movement evoked an unprecedented enthusiasm throughout the country—particularly in Western India, Bengal and North India—and gave a new complexion to the people's urge for freedom. It marked the beginning of a new phase in the history of India. Gandhi's image reached out to the masses. He dominated the political stage as a 'superb mobilizer of men, and as a skilled mediator between different layers of political activity'. But he raised expectations which he failed to fulfil. A spirit of frustration followed the sudden and unexpected withdrawal of the movement, and this explains the political inertia of the masses which followed his arrest. 'The whole movement centred round one person' and his removal from active leadership 'gave a death-blow to it, at least for the time being'. A political movement whose success depended upon one man, however great, could not achieve its aims.

Communal riots

Gandhi failed not only to bring *Swaraj* within a year as he had promised, but also to promote Hindu-Muslim unity through co-operation of the two communities in the Khilafat and Non-co-operation Movements. As a matter of fact the communal situation was far worse during the years 1921-27 than it had been before. The Moplah rebellion (1921) in Malabar was an offshoot of the Non-co-operation Movement. Serious riots occurred at Multan in 1922 and 1923, and in Delhi as also in Kohat in the North-West Frontier Province in 1924. After his premature release in February 1924 Gandhi undertook a three-week fast to appeal to the hearts of Hindus and Muslims to arrest the progressive deterioration in their mutual relations. Despite his effort no less than 16 riots took place in 1925. In 1926 a serious riot took place in Calcutta, and Swami Shraddhananda was murdered in his sick-bed for his campaign for the restoration to their ancestral religion (*shuddhi*) of those Hindus who had been converted to other faiths including Islam. The Simon Commission prepared a list of 112 riots which occurred between 1923 and 1927. These were not confined to certain regions only; almost every province was affected.

4. SWARAJYA PARTY

Gaya Congress (1922) : birth of Swarajya Party

The premature termination of the Non-co-operation Movement and Gandhi's removal (through imprisonment) from active leadership made it necessary for the Congress to decide 'whether civil disobedience in some other form, or some other measure of similar character, should be adopted'. A Civil Disobedience Committee consisting of several leaders reported towards the end of 1922 that the country was 'not prepared to embark upon general mass civil disobedience' such as the breaking of a particular law or the non-payment of a particular tax. On the question of boycott of the Legislatures the Committee was divided. One group recommended that Congressmen 'should contest the elections on the issue of the redress of the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs and immediate *Swarajya*'. The other group, following Gandhi's strategy, wanted 'no change of the Congress programme in respect of the boycott of the Councils'. The two groups came later to be known as 'pro-changers' and 'no-changers' respectively.

At the Gaya session of the Congress (December 1922), presided over by Chitta Ranjan Das, the 'no-changers', led by Rajagopalachari, defeated the 'pro-changers'. As Chitta Ranjan Das and his followers were 'pro-changers', he resigned from the Presidentship of the Congress and, supported by Motilal Nehru, formed a new party within the Congress. It was called the Congress-Khilafat Swarajya Party, but it was commonly known as the *Swarajya Party*. The new party soon acquired such strength that at a special session of the Congress held in Delhi in September 1923 it was resolved that Congressmen could stand as candidates in the elections, and propaganda against Council entry was suspended. Thus the 'pro-changers' were given freedom to pursue their programme; the 'no-changers', however, continued to follow Gandhi's constructive programme. Two wings of the Congress pursued two different policies.

Development of Swarajya Party

There was no formal split; the Swarajya Party claimed to be an integral part of the Congress and professed its adherence to non-violent Non-co-operation. But it set up a separate organization under separate leadership. Motilal Nehru and *Desh-bandhu* Chitta Ranjan Das jointly playing the chief role. In

pledged itself to a policy of 'uniform, continuous and consistent obstruction with a view to make government through the (Central) Assembly and (Provincial) Councils impossible'. In the November 1923 elections it secured a considerable number of seats. Although its influence varied in different provinces, it was able practically to rout the Liberal Party formed by the 'moderates' which had committed itself to implement the Reforms.

The Swarajists pursued the policy of obstruction in the Central Assembly in 1924-25 under the leadership of Motilal Nehru. They carried through the Assembly a resolution which led to the appointment of the Muddiman Committee. They fought for the repeal of repressive laws. They secured economic benefits such as protection for the Indian steel industry, abolition of the cotton excise duty, reduction of the duty on salt, improvement of labour condition, protection of Trade Unions, etc. Their success in playing the role of an effective Opposition was due largely to the co-operation of the Independents.

The Swarajists did valuable work in some of the Provincial Councils. In the Central Provinces, where they commanded an absolute majority of votes in the Council, they compelled the Ministers to resign and made Dyarchy unworkable. In Bengal they did not have an absolute majority in the Council but formed the largest single party. Chitta Ranjan Das was their leader; he was succeeded after his death (June 1925) by Jatindra Mohan Sen Gupta. They threw out the Ministry and contested repressive legislation. In other provinces the Swarajists won occasional successes but no significant victory.

Gandhi and Swarajists

The Coconada Congress session (December 1923) strengthened the position of the 'pro-changers', but the 'no-changers' continued to hope that 'Gandhi's return might reverse the engine of the Congress, back along the track of civil disobedience'. His unexpected release in February 1924 offered some prospect of reconciliation. After holding talks with Chitta Ranjan Das and Motilal Nehru he issued a statement in May 1924. He recognized the right of the 'pro-changers' to pursue their 'project' of obstruction although he did not believe in it. He advised the 'no-changers' to 'prove their own faith by prosecuting the constructive programme'.

This compromise did not reconcile the two wings. Within a few months 'the revolt against Gandhism was almost complete' and the Congress 'stood at the parting of ways'. As President of the Belgaum session of the Congress Gandhi reached an agreement with the Swarajists. They were to carry on the work in the Legislatures 'on behalf of the Congress organization', making their own rules and administering their own funds, while the Congress would restrict its work to the constructive programme.

This was Gandhi's 'surrender' to the Swarajists. At the Cawnpore Congress session a further step was taken; it was decided to 'take up and carry on all such political work as may be necessary in the interests of the country'. In the elections of November 1926 the Congress candidates were no longer labelled Swarajists. The Swarajists had succeeded in converting the Congress; but their original programme passed through a process of transformation, and their initial plan of non-cooperation with the Government was so modified that it 'hovered on the borderland of (responsive) co-operation'.

As a result of dissensions among the Swarajists the Party was divided into groups, one believing in obstruction, and the other in responsive co-operation. Henceforth the Swarajists ceased to play any effective role in the Legislatures.

5. CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

Gandhi's work, 1924-28

On re-entering public life after release from imprisonment (February 1924) Gandhi prevented an open rift in the Congress by accommodating the Swarajist Party within its broad framework. But his own faith in his old policy remained unimpaired, and he paid special attention to mass contact through *khadi*. He was distressed at the outbreak of communal riots which shattered his dream of Hindu-Muslim unity. The rift between him and the Ali brothers was final, and the Muslims no longer looked upon his support as a safeguard for their interests.

In 1928 the *Satyagraha* at Bardoli (in Gujarat), led by Vallabhbhai Patel, thrust Gandhi into the arena of political struggle. It was a protest by the peasantry against the Patidars' demand for enhanced rent. It succeeded in securing from the Bombay Government an enquiry into the level of enhancement.

power for the campaign was provided by young people. The mercantile communities contributed liberally to Congress funds. But the Muslims, as a community, kept themselves aloof from the movement, although a few Nationalist Muslim leaders courted imprisonment. During the movement Abul Kalam Azad remained a loyal Congressman.

Gandhi-Irwin Pact (1931)

The Congress did not participate in the first session of the Round Table Conference in London (November 1930-January 1931). Gandhi was in gaol. In January 1931 the Congress Working Committee declared that it was 'not prepared to give any recognition to the proceedings of the so-called Round Table Conference' attended by persons who had not been 'elected as their representatives by any section of the Indian people'. Meanwhile the Civil Disobedience Movement had been creating grave economic and administrative difficulties. Some readjustment of official policy towards the Congress was recognized as a political necessity by the Viceroy (Lord Irwin) and the Secretary of State. Towards the end of January 1931 Gandhi and the other top leaders of the Congress were released from prison. Direct talks between Gandhi and the Viceroy resulted in the conclusion of a 'Pact' (5 March 1931).

Most of the clauses of the 'Pact' related to issues arising out of the Civil Disobedience Movement which, it was agreed, was to be 'discontinued'. Boycott of British goods as a political weapon was to be given up, but peaceful picketing which was not in violation of the ordinary law might continue. Breaches of the salt-law would not be condoned. There was to be no enquiry into allegations about police excesses. The Congress would participate in further discussions at the Round Table Conference, but these would be confined to the scheme already evolved at the last session. By accepting this proposal Gandhi gave away not only the ideal of complete independence to which the Congress had committed itself at the Lahore session (1929) but also the goal of Dominion Status which had been accepted conditionally at the Calcutta session (1928). Younger Congress leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose were seriously perturbed at this sudden change of front; but they considered it prudent to follow Gandhi.

A few days later the Karachi Congress session (March 1931) endorsed the 'Pact' through an 'ingenious formula' declaring

that *Purna Swaraj* continued to be the goal. The Congress delegates to the Round Table Conference received flexible guidelines. The resolution was a 'signal triumph' for Gandhi: it was 'the pinnacle of the Mahatma's popularity and prestige'. But it was really a 'curious example of self-delusion'. Its framers were either unable to understand that nothing approaching *Purna Swaraj* could emerge from the framework prepared at the Round Table Conference, or else, they deliberately ignored the hurdles and expected a smooth passage.

For some months following the Karachi session of the Congress Gandhi made earnest efforts to ensure the implementation of the terms of the 'Pact' by the people led by Congressmen in different provinces. He urged the Government—unsuccessfully—to 'recognize the Congress as the intermediary between the Government and the people whom it represents'.

There was a new orientation of official policy when Lord Willingdon (April 1931-April 1936) succeeded Lord Irwin. The new Viceroy's approach to India's political problems was less liberal than that of the predecessor. There was a change in London as well: the Labour Government was replaced by the National Government (October 1931). Ramsay MacDonald, the Labour Prime Minister, retained his post in the new Government; but he was dependent upon the support of the Conservative Party. Sir Samuel Hoare, a leading Conservative, became Secretary of State for India.

Round Table Conference

Gandhi attended the second session of the Round Table Conference in London (September-December 1931) as the sole representative of the Congress. At the Conference he claimed that the Congress 'represented over 85 per cent of the population of India . . . the dumb, toiling semi-starved millions'. He asserted its 'claim also by right of service to represent even the princes, and the landed gentry, the educated class'. It also represented—he said—all minorities. He did not want 'to break the bond between England and India', but he wanted to 'transform that bond' by converting slavery into complete freedom.

It was a lone voice to which every body listened with attention but none extended support. Neither the British delegates, nor the minorities—specially the Muslims, nor the Princes accepted the claim of the Congress 'to represent the whole of India, all interests'.

Gandhi returned home empty-handed—'without either an assurance of India's advance to the relationship with Britain which the Congress had demanded, or recognition that Congress was more than one of a number of parties involved in the political discussion'.

Renewal of Civil Disobedience

Gandhi's complete failure in London rendered the renewal of Civil Disobedience inevitable. There was a fertile soil in the country for the seed of a further struggle. There was a serious economic crisis which necessitated heavy taxation and retrenchment. There were serious agrarian grievances. The commercial interests were worried over the linkage between the rupee and the pound at 1s. 6d. There were local confrontations between Congressmen and the Government. In the North-West Frontier Province there was confrontation between Abdul Ghaffar Khan's Red Shirt volunteers and Hindu Congressmen.

Willington and Hoare precipitated a crisis by their stiff policy. The former looked upon Gandhi as 'a sort of Jekyll and Hyde'. He explained his remark by saying that 'while he may possibly have his saint-like side, on the other he is the most Machiavellian bargaining little political humbug I have ever come across'. The Secretary of State told the Viceroy that he did not 'dream' of asking him 'to make anything in the nature of a pact' with Gandhi.

Civil Disobedience: second phase

Gandhi sought an interview with the Viceroy, but he got a curt refusal on 2 January 1932. On 4 January he was arrested and removed to the Yerwada jail at Poona. On the same day four Ordinances were promulgated. The All-India Congress Committee, the Congress Working Committee and many local Congress bodies were banned, and their premises and funds seized. By April 1932 the number of people imprisoned reached 32,458. Madan Mohan Malaviya observed in his Presidential speech at the Calcutta Congress session (March 1933) that nearly 120,000 persons had been arrested.

The 'speed of the Government crackdown' made it impossible for the Congress to plan campaign and to make arrangements for central direction and control. *Ad hoc* provisions were made for exercise of controlling functions by nominated bodies and individuals. The programme was based on the

old model: boycott of all British goods (particularly cloth), illegal manufacture of salt, disobedience of unjust official orders under the Ordinances, etc. The Delhi Congress session (April 1932) and the Calcutta Congress session (March 1933) were held under official ban.

Gandhi's 'major endeavour to influence Indian public life' while he was a prisoner was his fast over the Communal Award issued by Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald in conformity with the decisions made at the Round Table Conference. Gandhi's protest was aimed at the provision of Separate Electorates for the 'Depressed Classes' among the Hindus. He regarded it as a moral and religious issue and proposed to fast to death, even if released, if that provision was implemented by the Government (September 1932). When his condition deteriorated he accepted the Poona Pact drawn up by mutual agreement between some Hindu leaders and the 'Depressed Class' leader, B. R. Ambedkar.

Gandhi, even though subjected to the constraints of prison life, continued to take an active interest in the so-called 'untouchables' (whom he called Harijans). A campaign for removal of untouchability began immediately after he had broken his fast. The foundation of the *Harijan Sevak Sangh* with G. D. Birla as President was an important step. In May 1933 Gandhi took a dramatic step; he undertook a self-purificatory fast for 21 days for 'greater vigilance and watchfulness in connection with the Harijan cause'. The Government of India was not prepared to face the political repercussions of his possible death in prison. Public opinion could be placated by his release on humanitarian grounds. So he was released immediately 'in view of the nature of the fast and the attitude of mind which it disclosed'. At the same time it was officially stated that 'there was no intention (on the part of the Government) of negotiating with the Congress for withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience Movement or of releasing prisoners with a view to arrive at any settlement with them in regard to unlawful activities'. Willingdon's policy was entirely different from Irwin's.

The Civil Disobedience Movement was suspended for three months. There was 'demoralisation' among Congressmen. In July 1933 mass Civil Disobedience was replaced by *individual* Civil Disobedience. Gandhi was arrested (August 1933) when

he decided to inaugurate the new movement. He resorted to a fast, but when his condition became critical he was released (August 1933). He did not immediately resume *individual* Civil Disobedience. The movement collapsed, and by the beginning of 1934 it was 'dead like a door-nail'.

This was followed by Gandhi's decision to 'go out of the Congress' although he agreed to 'influence it from outside' (October 1934). He had no intention of retiring from politics, but his comparative isolation left the Congress free from constraints which his philosophy of *Satyagraha* had imposed upon it. It was 'once more a legal organization on the road to constitutional politics' which was opened by the Government of India Act, 1935. The acceptance of office under the Act in 1937 was a natural sequel. This form of co-operation with the British Government was a repudiation of what the Congress had demanded in 1928 and 1929, but the failure of the Gandhian method to win *Swaraj* called for a new strategy.

Conclusion

The Civil Disobedience Movement, like the Non-co-operation Movement, failed to produce direct and practical results. It could not bring *Swaraj* to India, nor could it significantly influence the process of Constitution-making which culminated in the Government of India Act of 1935. But it was a vital phase in the struggle for freedom. It promoted unity among Indians of different regions under the Congress banner. It provided an excellent recruiting ground for younger people—men and women—and educated them for positions of trust and responsibility in the organization as also in provincial administration which was captured in 1937. It gave wide publicity to political ideas and methods throughout the country and 'generated political awareness even in remote villages'. But it failed to forge communal unity: the Muslims kept aloof, and Gandhi never recovered the position among them which he had won during the Khilafat Movement.

CHAPTER 9

CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS (1919-35)

1. ACT OF 1919 IN OPERATION

Central Government

The Act of 1919 came into full operation (1 January 1921) when there was widespread restlessness throughout India. The shadow of the Jallianwalla Bag tragedy still hung over the country. The Moderates had seceded from the Congress. Surendra Nath Banerjee became a Minister in Bengal. The differences between the groups in the Congress led by Gandhi and Chitta Ranjan Das were taking shape.

Under the Act the 'final control' of Indian policy was vested in the Secretary of State on behalf of Parliament, and the Governor-General was required 'to guide his conduct in conformity with the general policy approved by Parliament'. At the same time it was the Governor-General's political duty to 'interpret the feelings, the desires of the Indian people' to the 'Home' Government. He was an 'intermediary between India and Great Britain'. This was a new conception of the Governor-General's functions; it had special relevance to the era of reforms inaugurated by Montagu's Declaration of 1917.

The Central Legislature, with a non-official majority, functioned in a new political atmosphere. Unable to secure its concurrence to some measures which the Government regarded as essential, the Governor-General had to use his special powers in respect of financial and legislative matters. The elected Speaker of the Legislative Assembly claimed, and used, powers of interference in its proceedings which embarrassed the Government. The Swarajists formed a vocal and resourceful opposition. Some of the ablest political leaders in the country entered the Legislative Assembly and gave it a new complexion through their parliamentary skill and political strategy.

The Central Government had larger control over the Provincial Governments in respect of finance than in the field of general administration. The economic consequences of the First Great War affected the operation of the new financial system based on the Meston Settlement.

Provincial Government : Dyarchy

The most important feature of the system of provincial

government under the Act of 1919 was Dyarchy, i.e., administration of 'reserved' subjects by Executive Councillors, and of 'transferred' subjects by Ministers. It was described in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report as an 'experimental and transitional' system. Actual working soon revealed its flaws.

The Ministers, who were responsible to the Legislative Council, belonged to different political groups and had no joint responsibility. There was lack of understanding and co-operation between them and the Executive Councillors. The Governors did not encourage joint deliberations between the 'reserved' and 'transferred' sides. The permanent officials, belonging to the Indian Civil Service, generally failed to co-operate with the Ministers. The charge of the Finance Department being vested in an Executive Councillor, the Ministers often failed to get adequate funds for public welfare programmes of their Departments. In all differences between the Executive Councillors and the Ministers the Governor had the final say. On the whole, the Ministers were crippled by the direct control of the Governor and the indirect control of the Government of India and the Secretary of State.

The system failed in Bengal and the Central Provinces where the opposition of the Swarajists made it impossible for any Minister to hold office on a stable basis. There were difficulties in Madras as well. The Swarajists formed an organized and disciplined party. Wherever they had sufficient numerical strength they tried to prove that Dyarchy was unworkable.

An assessment of the working of Dyarchy at the initial stage was made in 1924-25 by the Reforms Enquiry Committee with Sir Alexander Muddiman, Home Member of the Government of India, as Chairman. It submitted two Reports. The Majority Report (signed by the Chairman, two European and two Indian members) concluded that the evidence for failure of Dyarchy was far from convincing. The Minority Report (signed by four Indian members) concluded that the system had failed. The Report of the Simon Commission (1930) pointed out several defects in the working of Dyarchy. But the system remained in force till 31 March 1937. It was abolished by the Government of India Act, 1935.

2. NATIONAL DEMAND

The Act of 1919 provided for the appointment of a Royal

Commission at the expiration of ten years after the passing of the Act, 'for the purpose of inquiring into the working of the system of government and of reporting on the question of changing it'. This 'method of periodic enquiry and enactment' (of a new Act, if necessary) was intended to ensure that constitutional progress would be achieved by stages.

Indian nationalist opinion resented this provision and demanded an immediate and thorough modification of the Montagu-Chelmsford system. Resolutions to this effect were moved in the (Central) Legislative Assembly in 1921 and 1923, but the reply of the Secretary of State was that a fresh review of the constitutional position was not necessary at that stage because the new system had not been tested by time and experience and it offered scope for progress.

In 1923 the Swarajists became the single largest party in the Legislative Assembly. Under the able leadership of Motilal Nehru they adopted a policy of 'uniform, continuous and consistent obstruction'. Apart from the normal programme of business, they plunged immediately into the basic problem, viz., the reconstruction of the system of government based on the Act of 1919. In February 1924 Nehru moved a resolution recommending to the Government of India the adoption of 'necessary steps for revising the Government of India Act so as to secure for India full self-governing Dominion Status within the British Empire and Provincial Autonomy in the provinces'. In spite of official opposition the resolution was passed by the Legislative Assembly.

The Government of India did not accept the recommendation, but the Reforms Enquiry Committee (with Sir Alexander Muddiman as Chairman) was appointed to investigate the working of the Act of 1919. Most of the recommendations related to the provincial sphere, and two groups of members of the Committee submitted two Reports differing on major issues including Dyarchy.

In course of discussion on these Reports in the Legislative Assembly Motilal Nehru moved a resolution which came to be known as the 'National Demand'. It called upon the British Government to take two steps: (1) to make a declaration in Parliament embodying such constitutional changes as would make the Government of India fully responsible to the Central Legislature; (2) to summon a Round Table Conference or 'other suitable agency', adequately representative of all inter-

ests, to frame a detailed scheme of responsible government which was to be placed for approval before the Legislative Assembly and then submitted to Parliament for enactment as law. This resolution was carried in the Legislative Assembly but ignored by the Government.

3. NEHRU REPORT

Dominion Status

The Constitution adopted by the Congress, which was then controlled by the 'Moderates', in 1908 defined its object as 'the attainment by the people of India of a system of government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing members of the British Empire'. This 'ideal' was stressed by the Congress Presidents in 1914 and in 1915. In 1915 Gandhi stressed his 'loyalty to the British Empire'.

The Congress leaders had no precise idea about the exact constitutional position which they claimed for India. The 'self-governing members of the British Empire' had been enjoying a very large measure of autonomy on the basis of laws made by the British Parliament which were supplemented by political conventions; but their constitutional status had never been formally defined. During the First Great War and the subsequent years 'there took place a pronounced change in the status' of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa 'in the direction of full Statehood in International Law'.

By a resolution adopted at the Imperial Conference of 1926 'the self-governing communities composed of Great Britain and the Dominions' were defined as 'autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations'. This definition was given legal effect by the Statute of Westminster passed by the British Parliament in 1931. The 'Dominions' were completely free in respect of their domestic and external affairs; but they remained linked with the mother country—Great Britain—through their formal allegiance to the Crown. Every 'Dominion' had a Governor-General appointed by the Crown; but he was simply a constitutional Head of the Government without special powers.

All Parties Conference (1928)

In November 1927 the Secretary of State, Lord Birkenhead, announced the appointment of a Royal Commission, with Sir John Simon, an eminent lawyer and former Cabinet Minister, as Chairman, to enquire into the working of the Act of 1919 and to report on the question of further constitutional reforms. He had thrown out a challenge to Indians asking them to produce 'a Constitution which carries behind it a fair measure of general agreement among the great peoples of India'. He was convinced that no 'general agreement' would emerge, particularly because Hindu-Muslim differences had been gaining ground since the failure of the Khilafat Movement. But the Congress took up the challenge. At its Madras session (1927) it adopted resolutions boycotting the Simon Commission and taking steps for preparing—in co-operation with other political organizations—a *Swarajya* Constitution for India. Invitations were sent to the National Liberal Federation, the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Central Sikh League, the All-India Conference of Indian Christians, the Anglo-Indian Association, the States People's Conference, the Trade Union Congress and several other organizations. Representatives of the Congress and many of these organizations met at a conference, which came to be known as the All Parties Conference, in February 1928.

It was decided at this Conference that the question of framing a Constitution for India should be discussed on the basis of 'full responsible government'. The Madras Congress session (1927) had accepted the goal of 'complete national independence'; but all political parties and groups were not prepared to go so far. With a view to rallying all shades of political opinion behind a common plan, the Congress agreed to accept something less than its prescribed goal. The Conference appointed a Committee, with Motilal Nehru as President, to prepare the outline of an agreed Constitution (May 1928). The Committee's Report was submitted, and accepted with some modifications by the Conference, in August 1928. The 1928 Calcutta session of the Congress welcomed the Report as a 'great contribution towards the solution of India's political and communal problems'.

Nehru Report (1928)

The Nehru Committee had two primary difficulties. As its members 'belonged to different political schools and to dif-

ferent political groups' there was no unanimity with regard to the political goal of India. A compromise was made and the goal prescribed in the Report was 'the same constitutional status in the community of nations known as the British Empire, as was enjoyed by the Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of New Zealand, the Union of South Africa and the Irish Free State'. Dominion Status, as defined by the Imperial Conference of 1926, was to be 'the next immediate steps'.

The second hurdle was the problem of minorities, particularly the Muslims. The Report proposed two safeguards. The Constitution should include a Declaration of Rights guaranteeing 'freedom of conscience and the free profession and practice of religion'. There should be no State religion, and the State should not 'either directly or indirectly endow any religion' or favour or disfavour any community 'on account of religious belief or religious status'. An important political concession to the Muslims was the recommendation that the North-West Frontier Province (which had a Muslim majority and had been denied the benefit of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms) as also Sind (to be separated from the Bombay Presidency) should have the same constitutional status as other provinces. The abolition of the system of Separate Electorates was recommended; there were to be Joint Electorates, subject to reservation of seats for the Muslims at the Centre.

As regards the Princely States, the Report proposed the transfer of the exercise of paramountcy from the Governor-General (who exercised it through the Government of India) to the Government of the 'Commonwealth', i.e., the new India enjoying Dominion Status.

The Government of the 'Commonwealth' would have at its head a Governor-General 'as the King's representative'. He would act on the advice of an Executive Council which would be responsible to the Indian 'Parliament' (a bicameral Legislature). A similar system would be introduced in the provinces, the place of the Governor-General at the Centre being taken by a Governor. There was practically no federal characteristics in the proposed constitutional system; the Nehru Committee did not foresee that India's Constitution would be federal.

Opposition to Nehru Report

The Nehru Report 'embodied the frankest attempt yet

made by the Indians to face squarely the difficulties of communalism'. But the Muslim League rejected it in March 1929 and accepted Jinnah's 'Fourteen Points' which put forward an elaborate programme of communal privileges. Inside the Congress, the Nehru Report provoked opposition on an entirely different ground, viz., its acceptance of Dominion Status within the British Empire instead of complete independence which meant secession from the British Empire. Owing to the opposition of the younger section led by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose, the 1928 Calcutta session of the Congress made a compromise. It added an ultimatum to its acceptance of the Nehru Report: If the British Government failed to accept the Nehru Report 'in its entirety' on or before 31 December 1929, or rejected it before that date, the Congress would organize a campaign of non-violent Non-co-operation.

Lord Irwin's Declaration (1929)

Lord Chelmsford had little claim to political distinction when he was appointed Viceroy. His administration (April 1916—April 1921) was crowded with events, but he was weak in initiative and hesitant in controlling the political forces around him. The policy of reforms 'became identified with the masterful Montagu', but the Viceroy's part was 'by no means negligible'.

The next Viceroy, Lord Reading (April 1921-April 1926), was a former Attorney-General, Chief Justice, and Ambassador to the United States. His primary task in India was 'to make the Act of 1919 work; but he failed to 'give the country a positive lead, and so to capture its sympathy for the policy of partnership' implied in Montagu's Declaration of August 1917.

The next Viceroy, Lord Irwin (April 1926-April 1931), was a grandson of Sir Charles Wood who had been President of the Board of Control and Secretary of State for India in the mid-nineteenth century. He was a Cabinet Minister when he was selected for the Viceroyalty by the Conservative Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, who was his friend. Like Lord Lansdowne and Lord Curzon, he held high political offices in England after his retirement from India. He commanded not only political influence in England but also a high degree of 'moral earnestness combined with high-mindedness and ability'.

After three years' experience in India he realized that there was some confusion in Congress circles about the meaning of Dominion Status (which was generally regarded as something

less than complete independence) as also about the British Government's conception of India's political goal. He considered it necessary to restore public 'confidence in British purpose'. With the approval of the new Labour Government in England (with Ramsay Macdonald as Prime Minister) he made a Declaration on 31 October 1929. He stated: 'it is implicit in the Declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress, as there contemplated, is the attainment of Dominion Status'.

This was, as he himself said, merely 'a definition of purpose'; it did not indicate 'the method by which, and the time within which, the purpose was to be achieved'. It did not solve the problem created by the Congress resolution of 1928 accepting Dominion Status if it was granted not later than 31 December 1931. That conditional acceptance lapsed; the Congress declared complete independence as its goal at its Lahore session in December 1929.

4. SIMON COMMISSION

Lord Birkenhead

Lord Birkenhead, Secretary of State for India (1924-28) in Baldwin's Conservative Government, was a leading lawyer and a political diehard. He had disapproved of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. He wrote to Lord Reading: 'It was frankly inconceivable that India will ever be fit for Dominion self-government'. He expressed his contempt for Indian nationalists by describing them as 'failed B.A.'s' and 'noisy malcontents'.

Yet the political situation in England practically compelled him to appoint in 1927 the Royal Commission for enquiry into the working of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms which was scheduled to be appointed 'at the expiration of ten years after the passing of the Act' of 1919. A General Election was due in 1929, which was expected to return the Labour Party to power. The Conservative Government did not wish to give the Labour Government a chance to appoint the Statutory Commission lest it should be composed of members with liberal and pro-Indian views.

Congress reaction

It was a shock to India because the Commission had no Indian member. It was composed of seven British members of Parliament: Sir John Simon (Chairman, a leading lawyer

and a former Cabinet Minister), Viscount Burnham, Baron Strathcona, E. C. G. Cadogan, Stephen, Walsh (who was succeeded on resignation due ill health, by Vernon Hartson), G. R. Lane Fox, C. R. Attlee (a leading member of the Labour Party, later Prime Minister who arranged the Transfer of Power in 1947).

At the 1927 Madras session the Congress decided to 'boycott' the Commission on the ground that it had been appointed in 'utter disregard of India's right of self-determination'. 'Resentment and suspicion' were not confined to Congress circles alone. The Viceroy (Irwin) found that 'moderate men and proved friends of Great Britain like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru or M. R. Jayakar or Srinivasa Sastri felt as bitterly as did Motilal Nehru'. As leader of the Muslim League Jinnah said: 'Jallianwalla Bag was a physical butchery. The Simon Commission is the butchery of our soul'.

The Commission paid two visits to India (1928-29). It made extensive tours, facing hostile demonstrations, and took evidence at many places. The (Central) Legislative Assembly rejected the scheme of the Commission and declined to co-operate with it. But a Committee to co-operate with it was formed by some members elected by the Council of State and some members of the Legislative Assembly nominated by the Viceroy. All Provincial Legislative Councils, except the Legislative Council of the Central Provinces, appointed Committees to collaborate with the Commission.

Simon Report (1930)

The Simon Commission's Report was published in May 1930. The first volume contains a valuable survey of the working of the Act of 1919. The second volume contains the Commission's recommendations.

In sketching the principles of a new Constitution the Commission started with the premise that the goal was to enable 'India as a whole, not merely British India', to take 'her place among the constituent States of the Commonwealth of Nations united under the Crown'. Progress towards this goal required that 'the ultimate Constitution of India must be federal, for it is only in a federal Constitution that units differing so widely in constitution as the provinces and the (Princely) States can be brought together while retaining internal autonomy'. A federal structure should at first be created with the British Indian provinces only, but provision was to be made for the

entry of 'individual States or groups of States' as soon as they wished to join.

The Central Legislature should be reconstituted on a 'strictly federal basis'. It should consist of two chambers: a Federal Assembly (composed mainly of members chosen by the members of the Provincial Legislative Councils by the method of proportional representation) and the Council of State (with some changes in its existing composition). No alteration was proposed in the existing legislative powers of the Central Legislature.

The Central Executive should be composed of the Governor-General and his Executive Council (with minor changes in its constitution). It should not be 'responsible' to the Central Legislature in the same sense as the British Cabinet was 'responsible' to the British Parliament.

In the provincial sphere Dyarchy should be abolished, and all departments should be placed under Ministers who should work jointly and be 'responsible' to the Provincial Legislature. The Governor should not be a strictly constitutional ruler, nor should he have 'absolutely unlimited powers of overriding his Ministry'. The Provincial Legislative Councils should be enlarged in size, and the official bloc should be excluded.

As regards the Princely States, the Viceroy—and not the Governor-General in Council—should be the 'Agent of the Paramount Power in its relations with the Princes'. Pending the entry of the States into a federal union of the British Indian provinces, a list of 'matters of common concern' should be drawn up, and a new body, called the Council of Greater India, composed of representatives from the provinces and the States, should be set up for reaching conclusions on those 'matters of common concern'.

By the time the Report was published, its recommendations had become out of date as a result of political developments in India during the years 1928-29. The Congress committed itself to complete independence in 1929. So the details of a new Constitution had little relevance for it. The Government of India held in 1930 that a 'federation of all India' was 'still a distant ideal'; what was contemplated was 'the emergence of a unitary responsible government'. Thus there was a wide gulf of difference between the Simon Commission (which recommended a federal Constitution without responsible government at the Centre) and the Government of India.

5. ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

First Round Table Conference (1930-31)

Lord Irwin's Declaration of October 1929 disclosed the intention of the Labour Government (with Ramsay Macdonald as Prime Minister) 'to invite representatives of different parties and interests in British India and representatives of Indian States to meet them separately or together for the purpose of conference and discussion in regard both to the British Indian and the All-Indian problem'. This step was to be taken after the publication of the Simon Commission Report. The purpose was 'to submit proposals to Parliament which may command a wide measure of general agreement'. The invitation to the Princely States was intended to keep the door open for 'some unity of All-India'.

Such Indian participation in Constitution-making was not a recognition of India's right of self-determination, i.e., it was not for the Indians to frame their country's Constitution. The Viceroy made it clear that the proposed conference would merely 'elucidate and harmonize opinion' and 'afford guidance' to the British Government on whom would rest the final responsibility for framing the Constitution.

The Congress, committed to achieve *Purna Swarajya*, decided to launch a countrywide Civil Disobedience Movement which began with Gandhi's march to Dandi (March 1930). There were thousands of arrests; most of the top leaders, including Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, were imprisoned. Serious disturbances occurred in the North-West Frontier Province after the arrest of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, venerated as the 'Frontier Gandhi'. There were tribal disturbances led by the Haji of Turangzai. The Afridi rising of August 1930 led to the promulgation of martial law which remained in operation till January 1931. In Bengal the militant nationalists, who had been gathering strength for some years, carried out an armoury raid at Chittagong (April 1930). In Burma anti-British guerilla fighting started, the occasion being provided by an astrologer's prophecy that a national King would appear to protect the people.

This was the political background of the first session of the Round Table Conference which opened in London on 12 November 1930. It was presided over by the British Prime Minister, Ramsay Macdonald. The Congress remained un-

represented by its own choice ; but 89 members representing different political views and interests attended: 16 from three British political parties, 16 (nominated by the Princes) from the Indian States, and 57 from British India. Among those who came from British India were Liberal leaders like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and M. R. Jayakar, Muslim leaders like the Aga Khan, M. A. Jinnah and Mohammad Ali, the Hindu Mahasabha leader B. S. Moonje, the 'Depressed Class' leader B. R. Ambedkar, and spokesmen of Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, and the British business community. All of them were invitees of the British Government ; none could claim any representative character, although most of them were men of ability and wide political influence. The historical significance of the Conference lay in the fact that the Indian ruling Princes and some leading spokesmen of the Indian people 'sat together for many months in counsel'—for the first time—with the representatives of the British Government and of the British political parties.

On the basis of discussions at the Conference Ramsay Macdonald laid down the broad principles on which the new Constitution would be based. First, 'responsibility for the government of India should be placed upon Central and Provincial Legislatures', subject to certain 'safeguards' and guarantees for protection of minority rights. Secondly, a federal system would be introduced, with a Central Legislature 'embracing both the States and British India' to which the Central Executive would be responsible. Thirdly, at the Centre both Defence and External Affairs would be reserved to the Governor-General, i.e., the Central Legislature would have no control over these vital matters. Fourthly, the provinces would be given 'the greatest possible measure of self-government'. This outline marked a distinct advance over the scheme proposed by the Simon Commission. There was, however, no mention of Dominion Status.

Second Round Table Conference (1931)

The second session of the Round Table Conference opened in London on 7 September 1931. Meanwhile the political scene in England had changed. The National Government, dominated by the Conservative Party, was now in power. Although Ramsay Macdonald continued as Prime Minister, there was a Conservative Secretary of State for India, Sir Samuel Hoare. The political scene had changed in India too. The Congress had withdrawn the Civil Disobedience Movement

and agreed to participate in the Conference (Gandhi-Irwin Pact, 5 March 1931). Gandhi attended the Conference as the sole representative of the Congress. He failed to secure any real concession to the Congress point of view and returned to India empty-handed. Ramsay Macdonald's closing statement summarizing the results of the Conference stressed two points: 'responsible Federal Government at the Centre, subject to certain reservations and safeguards'; recognition of Governor's provinces as 'responsibly governed units, enjoying the greatest possible measure of freedom from outside interference and dictation'. No agreement could be reached on the question of distribution of seats in the Legislatures on account of conflicting claims of different communities, particularly the Muslims. Most of the members made a written request to the Prime Minister to give a 'decision' on this unresolved problem which they would accept as binding.

Third Round Table Conference (1932)

While the Civil Disobedience Movement was in progress and the leaders of the Congress (including Gandhi) and thousands of their followers were in gaol, three Committees of the Round Table Conference continued to work on details of the proposed constitutional scheme.

In August 1932 Ramsay Macdonald announced his 'decision' on the representation of different communities in the Provincial Legislatures. This is known as the 'Communal Award'. Provision was made for separate communal electorates for Muslims, Europeans, Sikhs, Indian Christians, and Anglo-Indians. Voters not belonging to any of these communities would vote in a 'general constituency'. Weightage was to be allowed to the Muslims in provinces in which they were in a minority as also to the Sikhs and the Hindus who were minorities in the Punjab; but no such privilege was provided for the Hindu minority in Bengal. A complicated arrangement was proposed for voting by members of the 'Depressed Classes'. They would vote in 'general constituencies'; but 'special seats' would be assigned to them, and for these seats they alone—and not the 'Caste Hindus'—would be entitled to vote.

It was stated that 'any practicable alternative scheme' which might be 'mutually agreed upon' by the communities concerned would be acceptable to the British Government. This kept the door open for Gandhi, who was in jail at that time, to plead for modification of the 'Award' so far as the provision relating

to the 'Depressed Classes' was concerned. In jail he commenced a fast unto death (September 1932) in protest against the segregation of the 'Depressed Classes' from the general Hindu community. Prominent political leaders, including B. R. Ambedkar, the leader of the 'Depressed Classes', intervened. An Agreement, known as the *Poona Pact*, was reached; the fast was given up. It was proposed that the system of reserving 'special seats' for the 'Depressed Classes' should be replaced by the system of joint electorate with seats reserved for them. Thus the 'Depressed Classes' were to vote in the 'general constituencies' and they would not be segregated from the 'Caste Hindus', but they would have seats reserved for persons of their choice. They secured twice the number of the seats allotted to them by the 'Communal Award' and a proportion of representation in excess of the proportion of their population. This arrangement was accepted by the British Government as an agreed modification of the 'Communal Award'.

The Civil Disobedience Movement continued, but it had no visible effect on the British Government's attitude towards the problem of Constitution-making. The third session of the Round Table Conference met for about six weeks (November-December 1932); but it was a rump assembly, attended by only 46 delegates. The Congress was, of course, unrepresented. The general outlines of the new Constitution, as evolved in the three Conferences, were given the final shape.

6. ACT OF 1935

Making of a Constitution

The Round Table Conference having completed its task, the British Government formulated its proposals and put them in a *White Paper*, entitled *Proposals for Indian Constitutional Reform*, which was published in March 1933. A Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament, with Lord Linlithgow as Chairman, was appointed (April 1933) to 'consider the future government of India' with special reference to the *White Paper* proposals. Its Report, presented in October 1934, endorsed practically all major points in those proposals. This Report, along with the *White Paper*, formed the basis of the *Government of India Bill* which was introduced in the House of Commons by Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State for India, in December 1934. The Bill passed through both Houses of Par-

liament without any substantial change and was finally passed on 2 August 1935. Two Committees—one to draw up a scheme of delimitation of constituencies, the other to recommend principles for the allocation of financial resources—submitted their Reports in the early months of 1936.

The White Paper as also the *Joint Committee Report* provoked sharp criticism in India. The Congress Working Committee resolved (June 1934) that the *White Paper* 'falls far short of the Congress goal, if it does not retard the progress towards it'. Rajendra Prasad's Presidential address at the annual session of the Congress (October 1934) contained as elaborate criticism of the *White Paper* proposals.

Federal Scheme

The Government of India Act, 1935, had two principal parts, dealing with Provincial Autonomy and the 'Federation of India'.

There was to be a 'Federation of India' consisting of the Governor's provinces and the Princely States joining it through *Instruments of Accession*, and including the Chief Commissioner's provinces. It was not legally necessary that all Princely States should join the Federation; but the Federation could not be formed unless and until the acceding States were entitled to send not less than 52 members to the Council of State and their aggregate population amounted to at least one-half of the total population of all the States.

The executive authority of the Federation was to be exercised by the Governor-General as representative of the King-Emperor. He was to exercise his functions with the 'aid and advice' of a Council of Ministers who would be appointed by him and hold office during his pleasure. But in certain matters he was required to exercise 'discretion', and in certain other matters to exercise his 'individual judgement'. In the first case he was entitled to act without seeking advice from his Ministers. In the second case he was required to consult his Ministers but not bound to accept their advice. Moreover, he was required to take personal charge of four subjects: defence, ecclesiastical affairs, external relations except the relations between the Federation and any part of the British Dominions, tribal affairs. He was to administer these subjects with the assistance of 'Counsellors' appointed by him. In addition to Ministers and Counsellors he was empowered to appoint a Financial Adviser. Again, he would exercise the functions of the Crown in its

relations with the Princely States, not as Governor-General acting through his Ministers, but quite independently as *Crown Representative*.

The Federal Legislature was to consist of two chambers: a Council of State with 250 members and a Federal Assembly of 375 members. The representatives of the Princely States in the Council of State and the Federal Assembly, numbering not more than 104 and 125 respectively, were to be nominated by their rulers, not elected by the people. The electoral system in the British Indian provinces was very complicated. The main feature was the principle of Separate Electorates. The two Houses had nearly co-equal powers, except in financial matters in which the Federal Assembly was the predominant partner.

Three Legislative Lists marked the division of legislative powers between the Federation and its units. The Federal Legislature would have exclusive power to make laws on subjects enumerated in List I (defence, external affairs, railways, etc.). The Provincial Legislatures would have exclusive power to make laws on subjects enumerated in List II (law and order; local self-government, education, public health, etc.). As regards subjects enumerated in List III (criminal law, contracts, newspapers, etc.), the Federal Legislature and the Provincial Legislature concerned would have concurrent legislative powers. The Governor-General had some special powers in regard to legislation.

Provision was made for the establishment of a *Federal Court* with original, appellate and advisory jurisdiction. Its original jurisdiction covered disputes between any two or more of the following parties: the Federation, any of the provinces or any of the Princely States which joined the Federation. It heard appeals from High Courts. It could advise the Governor-General, at his request, on questions of law. Appeals from its decisions lay to the Privy Council in London.

A *Federal Railway Authority* was to be established for the management of the railways.

The Governor-General was empowered, if at any time he was satisfied that a situation had arisen in which the government of the Federation could not be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Act, to assume to himself—by Proclamation—any of the powers vested in any Federal body or authority except the Federal Court.

Authorities in England

The Secretary of State continued to be the Crown's agent (responsible to Parliament) for the exercise of all authority vested in the Crown in relation to the affairs of India. Apart from other powers, he was given power to supervise and control the Governor-General and the Provincial Governors whenever they acted in their 'discretion' or exercised their 'individual judgement'. His Council was replaced by a body of *Advisers*.

Provincial Autonomy

The principle of Provincial Autonomy was 'the first and basic proposal' in the *White Paper*. By Provincial Autonomy the Joint Parliamentary Committee meant a scheme 'whereby each of the Governor's provinces will possess an Executive and a Legislature having exclusive authority within the province in a precisely defined sphere, and in that exclusively provincial sphere broadly free from control by the Central Government and Central Legislature'. Its essence was legislative and administrative devolution from the Central Legislature and Government to the Provincial Legislatures and Governments. Dyarchy was abolished and the Provincial Ministers were made generally responsible for the whole field of provincial government, subject to 'safeguards' such as the Governor's special powers and 'special responsibilities'.

Provincial Executive

The Act divided the British Indian provinces into two categories: Governor's provinces numbering 11 (Madras, Bombay, Bengal, United Provinces, Punjab, Bihar, Central Provinces and Berar, Assam, North-West Frontier Province, Orissa, Sind) and 5 Chief Commissioner's provinces (British Baluchistan, Ajmer-Merwara, Coorg, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Panth Piplodā). The executive and legislative authority of the Federation would extend to the Chief Commissioner's provinces; they would not enjoy autonomy. Provincial Autonomy was to be introduced in the Governor's provinces only.

The Governor's provinces, though federally united, would derive their powers and authority directly from the Crown, not—as before—from the Government of India. For the first time they acquired a separate legal personality. The Federal Government and the Federal Legislature would no longer possess in these provinces any legal power or authority with respect to any matter falling within the exclusive provincial sphere,

although the Governor-General would have supervising authority over the Governors in certain respects. The sphere within which Provincial Autonomy would be operative was defined through the distribution of legislative powers as laid down in the three Legislative Lists. The executive power of the provinces would be co-extensive with their legislative power.

The executive authority of a province would be exercised by the Governor as the representative of the King-Emperor. He would have a Council of Ministers who would be appointed by him and hold office during his pleasure. The abolition of Dyarchy made the control of the Ministers co-extensive with the Provincial Government's activities; there would be no Executive Council and no 'reserved' subject, and every subject would be treated as 'transferred'. But the Ministers' power would be crippled by the special powers conferred on the Governor.

The Governor would have 'special responsibilities' for certain subjects in respect of which he was to exercise his 'individual judgement', i.e., he would be free to reject his Ministers' advice. These subjects included 'the prevention of any grave menace to peace and tranquillity', 'the safeguarding of the legitimate interests of minorities', administration of 'excluded areas' and 'partially excluded areas', executive action to give effect to legislation against discrimination, etc. In addition, he was empowered to exercise his 'individual judgement' in some other matters, such as police rules, promotion or punishment of certain officials, etc. He was required to act in his 'discretion', i.e., without consulting his Ministers, with regard to certain matters such as conduct of business of the Provincial Government, summoning of the Provincial Legislature, assent to or reservation of Bills passed by the Provincial Legislature, issue of Ordinances, appointment of members of the Public Service Commission, etc. While exercising his 'individual judgement' or acting in his 'discretion' he would be subject to the 'general control' of the Governor-General.

As before, the departmental Secretaries (who were in all cases senior members of the Indian Civil Service) would have direct access to the Governor. This implied greater trust in the bureaucracy than in the Ministers.

Section 93 of the Act empowered the Governor, if at any time he was satisfied that a situation had arisen in which the government of the province could not be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Act, to assume to himself—by

Proclamation—all or any of the powers vested in any provincial body or authority except the High Court.

Provincial Legislature

In six provinces (Madras, Bombay, Bengal, United Provinces, Bihar, Assam) the Legislature would consist of two chambers: the Legislative Council (the upper House) and the Legislative Assembly (the lower House). In the remaining provinces it would consist of a single chamber—the Legislative Assembly. The number of members in the Legislative Councils varied in different provinces between 65 and 21. The number of members in the Legislative Assemblies varied in different provinces between 250 and 50. The scheme of allotment of seats was based on the principle of Separate Electorates. The powers of the Legislative Council were not co-extensive with those of the Legislative Assembly; the former had only the power of revision and delay. The Governor had legislative power of different kinds, including the power of promulgating Ordinances and making regulations for the 'peace and good government' of 'excluded areas' and 'partially excluded areas'. He could give his assent to a Bill passed by the Legislature, withhold his assent from it, return it to the Legislature for reconsideration, or reserve it for the consideration of the Governor-General.

As a general principle, the Provincial Legislature was empowered to legislate on all subjects in List II as also—concurrently with the Federal Legislature—on all subjects in List III.

The allocation of the sources of revenue between the Federation and the provinces was a necessary consequence of the introduction of the federal system. In the system prescribed by the Act the necessity for securing a considerable degree of elasticity to provincial revenues was recognized. There was an improvement on the system introduced by the Act of 1919. A more equitable distribution between the Federation and the provinces was provided for.

Political reaction in India

The principal defects of the new system were pin-pointed from the Congress point of view by Rajendra Prasad in his Presidential address at the annual session held in October 1934. First, the Federal Legislature would not be really 'representative of the nation', for the members sent from the States would be nominated by their rulers, not elected by the people. 'The

rulers of one-third of India will be called upon to counteract through their nominees the progressive elected elements of the remaining two-thirds'. Secondly, the transfer of power to popular control would not be real, for the special powers vested in the Governor-General and the Governors left a very wide area outside popular control. Thirdly, no less than 80 per cent of the expenditure of the Federal Government would be non-votable. This would seriously cripple the authority of the Federal Legislature. Fourthly, there was no provision for growth and development of self-government, 'no pretence at recognition of India's right of self-determination'.

In the Legislative Assembly (February 1935) a resolution was passed, describing the Federal Scheme as 'fundamentally wrong and totally unacceptable' and Provincial Autonomy was 'most unsatisfactory and disappointing'. This was a compromise between the Congress Party and the Muslim League Party led by Mohammad Ali Jinnah.

Jinnah's condemnation of the Federal Scheme was unqualified, for he was afraid that the accession of the Princely States (most of which would send Hindu representatives to the Federal Legislature) would substantially increase the Hindu majority at the Centre. He described the scheme of Provincial Autonomy as 'undoubtedly an advance on the present' although it had 'certain objectionable features'. He was prepared to accept this scheme because it would ensure Muslim control of four provinces: Bengal, Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind. He looked at the proposed constitutional system from the standpoint of his own community instead of attaching proper weight to its crippling effect on self-government on a national scale.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS (1934-42)

1. PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY IN OPERATION

Failure of Federal Scheme

When the Federal Scheme was taking its final shape the rulers of the Princely States began to feel that if they joined the Federation they would lose much of their power and authority. None of them attended the third session of the Round Table Conference. After the passing of the Act of 1935 they raised questions on the fundamental principles of the Federal Scheme. They were anxious to 'preserve and safeguard' the whole of their 'sovereignty and internal authority', but certain provisions of the Act left room for encroachment by the Governor-General and the Federal Government.

The attitude of the princes was influenced to a large extent by the movement organized by the States People's Conference with which the Congress had identified itself in sympathy if not in action. As far back as 1928, the Congress had passed a resolution urging the princes 'to introduce responsible government and to 'guarantee elementary and fundamental rights of citizenship'. It also assured the people of the States of its sympathy and support in their legitimate and peaceful struggle for the attainment of full responsible government'. 'Sympathy and support' did not mean active Congress participation in the States people's movement. In 1935, 1936, 1938 and 1939 similar resolutions were passed; but it was made clear that the States people must themselves carry on their struggle, and the Congress could only 'exercise moral and friendly influence'. After the Congress had formed Ministries in seven provinces (1937) it declared the possibility of its direct participation in that struggle.

This was a threat which the princes could not ignore. The Congress victory in the provincial elections of 1937 served as a powerful stimulus to the people's movement in the States. Nationalist aspirations appeared to be triumphant in British India; it was natural that similar aspirations would be intensified in the States. The Congress also felt strong enough to make a bolder approach to the problem of the States. Presiding over the States People's Conference in 1938 Jawaharlal

Nehru said : 'The time has come for the integration of those various struggles in the States *inter se* and the major struggle against British imperialism'. Of this integrated struggle the Congress would be the natural leader.

Although the Congress as an organization did not participate in the struggle in the States, individual Congressmen were allowed to do so. Mass movements took place in Mysore, Jaipur, Rajkot, Travancore, Kashmir and Hyderabad. Gandhi undertook a fast in connection with the Rajkot movement ; but the issue raised by him was settled on the basis of legal opinion secured from the Chief Justice of the Federal Court. Reforms of different kinds and degrees were introduced in Kashmir, Hyderabad, Baroda, Gwalior, Indore, Jodhpur, Bharatpur, Rampur, Rajkot and Cochin. In general, there was a distinct trend towards improvement of administration in the States.

These developments added to the princes' misgivings about joining the Federation which was very likely to be dominated by the Congress. A statement made by Sir Samuel Hoare made it clear that 'certain matters, which had previously been determined between the States and the Paramount Power (represented by the Governor-General), will in future be regulated, in so far as the States accede to the Federation, by the legislative and executive authority of the Federation'. This increased the princes' apprehension of interference in their affairs by the Congress-dominated Centre. Two successive Viceroys, Lord Willingdon (1931-36) and Lord Linlithgow (1936-43), took little interest in persuading the princes to accept the Federal Scheme. After the outbreak of the Second Great War and the resignation of the Congress Ministries (1939) all talks about the Federal Scheme were suspended. The Congress, the Muslim League and the princes having declined—for different reasons—to accept it, the British Government had no alternative but to drop it. Moreover, the constitutional problem had assumed a new complexion as a result of the non-co-operation of the Congress with war efforts and the Muslim League's demand for the partition of India.

Implementation of Act of 1935

The Act came into force on 1 April 1937 except the Sections dealing with the Federation and the Federal Railway Authority. As no Princely State acceded to the Federation, the proposed Federation never came into existence. The Cen-

tral Government and the Central Legislature continued to function, generally speaking, according to the provisions of the Act of 1919. So far as the Sections dealing with the provinces were concerned, the Act of 1935 remained in operation till 1947 when substantial changes were introduced following the Transfer of Power.

Congress and office-acceptance

In 1934-35 the failure of the Civil Disobedience Movement to make any practical impact on the British Government's policy indicated to many Congressmen the expediency of reviving the Council entry programme. A conference held in Delhi in March 1934 decided to revive the Swarajya Party and to make preparations for contesting the forthcoming elections on the basis of a two-fold programme : repeal of repressive laws and rejection of *White Paper* proposals in favour of demands placed by Gandhi at the Round Table Conference. Within two months (May 1934) the All-India Congress Committee formed a Parliamentary Board to 'run and control elections of members to the Central Legislature on behalf of the Congress'. The same month saw the birth of the *Congress Socialist Party* 'as an all-India organization of the Socialists in the Congress'. On the whole, 'the Civil Disobedience Movement was switched off and the Council entry programme was switched on'. In the elections the Congress secured a large number of seats in all provinces except the Punjab. In the Legislative Assembly the Congress Party failed to carry its motion expressing total rejection of the proposed constitutional scheme ; it had to remain content with a compromise motion sponsored by Jinnah.

After the passing of the Act of 1935 the Muslim League decided to take part in elections to the new Provincial Legislatures. Jawaharlal Nehru, as Congress President (1936), said that the Congress attitude to the Act would be 'one of uncompromising hostility'. At the same time he recommended that the Congress should take part in the elections 'on the basis of a detailed political and economic programme, with our demand for a Constituent Assembly in the forefront'. Thus the programme of the Swarajya Party was revived and accepted by the Congress as a whole.

Taken as a whole, the Congress victory in the elections in 1937 was almost spectacular. Out of a total of 1,585 seats in the Provincial Assemblies it won 711. But it contested only 58 out of the total of 482 Muslim seats and won only 26. Of this

almost microscopic quota the North-West Frontier Province, where the 'Frontier Gandhi' (Abdul Ghaffar Khan) exercised great political influence, supplied 19. In Bengal, the Punjab, Sind, and the North-West Frontier Province the newly elected non-Congress Muslim members belonged to different parties and groups. The Muslim League, led by Jinnah, could not secure a majority in any of these four Muslim-majority provinces.

The next stage was Ministry-making. In the four Muslim-majority provinces Coalition Ministries were formed under Muslim Prime Ministers; the Congress did not join. In Assam, a non-Muslim-majority province, a Coalition Ministry was formed under a Muslim Prime Minister.

The Congress had a clear majority in five provinces: Madras, United Provinces, Central Provinces, Bihar, Orissa. In Bombay, with nearly half the seats at its command, it could count upon the support of some pro-Congress groups to secure a majority. In Assam, as also in the North-West Frontier Province, it formed a strong and solid group capable of exploiting the differences among the different Muslim groups which constituted the majority. In the Punjab, Sind and Bengal it had not even the remotest prospect of securing a majority.

It was not easy to reconcile the policy of 'uncompromising hostility' to the Act of 1935 with acceptance of office under its provisions. The highest authorities of the Congress made a compromise: the policy of 'uncompromising hostility' was reiterated, but acceptance of office in provinces where the Congress was in a majority was permitted subject to the condition that the Governor promised not to use his 'special powers of interference'.

This condition created a temporary deadlock. The Congress leaders in six Provincial Legislatures (Madras, Bombay, United Provinces, Bihar, Orissa, Central Provinces) were invited by the Governors concerned to form Ministries, but they declined to do so because the Governors refused to give the necessary assurance. The Governors appointed 'Interim Ministries' which could not command a majority in the Provincial Legislatures and could not legally continue in office for more than six months. The deadlock was broken by a statement issued by the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, in June 1937 which indicated that the Governor's 'special powers' would be kept in suspension so long as an obvious emergency did not

make their use indispensable. This satisfied the Congress. The 'Interim Ministries' resigned; the Congress formed. Ministries in the six provinces (July 1937). The Congress had lost its revolutionary ardour, and 'Parliamentary mentality had come to stay with the people'. The idea that it would be possible under the Act 'to do something for the people' was gaining ground. Civil Disobedience had lost its appeal as a political strategy.

Congress provinces' (1937-39)

In the North-West Frontier Province the non-Congress Coalition Ministry was replaced by a Congress Ministry in September 1937. A year later a Coalition Ministry, dominated by the Congress and pledged to implement the Congress programme under Congress leadership, took office in Assam. In Sind a non-Congress Ministry, formed in March 1938, was dependent upon the conditional support of the Congress. Thus, by September 1938, the Congress was in power in seven provinces (Madras, Bombay, United Provinces, Bihar, Orissa, Central Provinces, North-West Frontier Province), it was in practical control of administration in one province (Assam), and its support was a material factor for the Ministry in another province (Sind). Only two provinces—Bengal and the Punjab—remained outside the political orbit of the Congress.

Meanwhile a temporary political crisis had occurred in the United Provinces and Bihar (February 1938). The Governors of these two provinces, supported by the Viceroy, declined to approve the Congress Ministries' proposal for release of political prisoners. The Congress Ministers resigned. The Congress, at its Haripura session, described the Governor's action as unconstitutional and the Viceroy's action in supporting it as a violation of the assurance given by him in his statement of June 1937. The crisis was over when the two Governors agreed to the 'progressive release' of the political prisoners. The Congress Ministers withdrew their resignations.

There was no other crisis in the 'Congress Provinces' during the years 1937-39. If the Governors ever used their 'special powers', they were able to secure their Ministers' acquiescence. The Congress members in the Legislatures submitted to party discipline in the normal parliamentary manner. The Congress 'High Command'—the Working Committee and the Parliamentary Board—provided the unity of purpose as also of action in all 'Congress provinces'. It nominated Congress candi-

dates for election to the Legislatures, selected Prime Ministers and other Ministers, and kept a close watch on their work.

'Non-Congress provinces' (1937-47)

In the Punjab the Unionist Ministry (composed of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs) of Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan (1937-42) was stronger and presented greater solidarity than the Ministries in other 'non-Congress provinces'. It was not attracted by Jinnah's demand for the partition of India. But the Muslim League gradually established its influence on the Muslim section of the Unionist Party, and during the premiership of Khizr Hyat Khan (who succeeded Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan) the strength of the Ministry declined. Ministerial rule was, however, uninterrupted till March 1947.

In Bengal there were several changes. The Coalition Ministry of Fazlul Huq (composed mainly of the Krishak Praja Party and the Muslim League) remained in office—with changes in its composition—from April 1937 till his resignation in March 1943 under unconstitutional pressure from the Governor. For a few days the Governor took over the administration under Section 93 of the Act; then a Muslim League Ministry, led by Sir Nazimuddin, was installed in office. The Muslim League continued to be in power till 14 August 1947, but Sir Nazimuddin was replaced by H. S. Suhrawardy in April 1946.

In Sind a succession of Ministries under different leaders held office during the decade 1937-47. One of the premiers, Allah Bakhsh, who had close association with the Congress, was dismissed by the Governor.

The forced resignation of Fazlul Huq and the dismissal of Allah Bakhsh were significant examples of the role which the Governors could play—if they wished—under the Act of 1935. Such exercise of power betrayed their desire to favour the Muslim League at the cost of the Congress.

Second Great War and Congress

In April 1939, when the approach of war was foreshadowed in Europe, the Government of India was authorized by Parliament to exercise certain emergency powers in case of war or threat of war. At the same time Indian troops were despatched to Aden which was formerly a part of British India but had been separated under the Act of 1935 and constituted a colony. The Congress reaction was expressed through a resolution declaring that it 'is determined to oppose all attempts to impose

a war on India and use Indian resources in a war without the consent of the Indian people'.

This was the key-note of Congress policy during the Second Great War (1939-45). The British Government ignored the Congress warning and despatched Indian troops to Egypt as also to Singapore. The Congress directed its members in the Central Legislative Assembly to refrain from attending the next session of the House and called upon the Ministers in the 'Congress provinces' to 'assist in no way the war preparations of the British Government'.

On 3 September 1939 the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, proclaimed that war had broken out 'between His Majesty and Germany' and that a state of War Emergency existed in India. This Proclamation meant India's automatic involvement in the War without her consent. On 15 September the Congress Working Committee passed a comprehensive resolution. It recorded 'its entire disapproval of the ideology and practice of Fascism and Nazism and their glorification of war and violence and the suppression of the human spirit'. It promised co-operation with other free nations on the part of a 'free democratic India'. It asked the British Government to declare its 'real objective' in the War and its policy as to 'the position of India in the present and in the future'. On 10 October the All-India Congress Committee laid down a specific condition: 'India must be declared an independent nation, and present application must be given to this status to the largest possible extent'. Gandhi was in favour of offering unconditional support to the British Government although—in view of the Congress creed of non-violence—it was to be 'purely moral'.

Linlithgow issued a statement on 17 October 1939. It was stated that Britain's war aims were not yet defined in detail, but the British Prime Minister (Neville Chamberlain) had made it clear that she sought no material advantage for herself. As regards India, Dominion Status remained the goal, and the British Government would be prepared, at the end of the War, 'to regard the scheme of the Act (of 1935) as open to modification in the light of Indian views'.

On 22 October 1939 the Congress Working Committee declared the Viceroy's statement to be 'wholly unsatisfactory'. It was stated that the Congress 'cannot possibly give any support to Britain, for it would amount to an endorsement of the imperialist policy'. All Congress Ministries were called upon to

resign. They resigned between 27 October and 15 November, 1939. A resolution of the Congress Working Committee (23 November 1939) reiterated the demand for 'the recognition of India's independence and of the right of her people to frame their Constitution through a Constituent Assembly'.

In six 'Congress provinces' (Madras, Bombay, United Provinces, Bihar, Central Provinces, Orissa) no Ministry could be formed which could command majorities in the Legislatures. So Governor's rule was imposed under Section 93 of the Act of 1935. Non-Congress Ministries were formed at different times between 1939 and 1943 in Orissa, Assam and the North-West Frontier Province.

During the War elections to the Provincial Legislatures were postponed by laws passed by Parliament. Fresh elections were held in the winter of 1945-46. The Congress contested these elections and formed Ministries in Madras, Bombay, United Provinces, Bihar, Central Provinces, North-West Frontier Province and Assam between February and April 1946.

2. POLITICAL PARTIES : THE CONGRESS

Changes in Congress (1934-36)

Two significant changes occurred in the Congress after the collapse of the Civil Disobedience Movement. The decision to fight the elections to the Central Legislature had Gandhi's approval. 'The decision of 1920 to boycott the Councils was reversed in 1923, reaffirmed in 1929, and was now again reversed in 1934. The Congress thus slid back into the position which it had renounced as a result of the Non-co-operation Movement in 1920. This new policy led inevitably to Congress participation in the provincial elections under the Act of 1935 and acceptance of office. From the early months of 1934 to the closing months of 1939 (when the Congress Ministries resigned) the Congress suspended the policy of confrontation with the British Government.

The second important change was the emergence of a new philosophy of socialism within the Congress; but it was confined to a numerically small section of the organization. This was due largely to the infiltration of the Communist ideology from Soviet Russia. A socialist left wing emerged in the Congress session of 1934. It had two notable spokesmen, Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose.

Although Nehru did not fully accept the methods and approach of the 'orthodox Communists' he thought that the 'ideal of Communism' was 'sound'. Bose did not fully agree with him. He believed that a synthesis of 'some form of Communism' and 'some form of Fascism' was possible and hoped that India would discover it. Bose's character and ideology had an element of mysticism which was absent in Nehru. Bose had close contact with revolutionaries who believed that freedom could be won by violence. Nehru had no sympathy for this belief.

At the Lucknow session of the Congress (April 1936) Nehru stated the basic difference between the national movement in India on the one hand and the Socialist and Communist movements in Europe on the other. The *primary* object of the former was the attainment of political independence, and not any radical social and economic order. Naturally its leadership was monopolized by the bourgeoisie although Gandhi's leadership had drawn the peasantry and the working classes within its orbit. In Europe there was no question of liberation from foreign rule; the object of the struggle was to evolve a revolutionary social-cum-economic order, and the leadership was naturally assumed by the proletariat.

The Congress organization was in the grip of the old, conservative section which enjoyed the blessings of Gandhi. Those who believed in socialism formed a feeble minority. The decision to contest the provincial elections was taken at the Lucknow Congress against Nehru's known views. All that he could do was to take three leading Socialists—Jayaprakash Narayan, Narendra Dev and Achyut Patwardhan—in the Working Committee. This made no real assault on the conservative section's stronghold; blessed by Gandhi, it continued to determine Congress policy. Nehru did not identify himself with the Socialists; whenever differences appeared between them and Gandhi he succumbed to his influence. As he himself says: 'We went with him although we did not accept his philosophy'. 'Brave and effective action (led by Gandhi) with an ethical halo about it' had an 'irresistible appeal' for Nehru.

At the Faizpur session of the Congress (December 1936), with Nehru again as President, the Socialists urged that the Congress should 'declare the solidarity of the Indian people with the enslaved peoples of the world and with the people of the U.S.S.R.' But Nehru had lost much of his early enthusiasm

for radical ideas. 'The Congress', he declared, 'today stands for full democracy in India and fights for a democratic State, not for Socialism'.

Congress in office (1937-39)

The elections held in 1936-37 served an important political purpose. Election propaganda brought the Congress into close contact with the masses and generated political consciousness among them. The enfranchisement of $3\frac{1}{2}$ crores of voters, including many women, under the Act of 1935 extended the field for political propaganda.

As in the case of participation in the elections, so in the case of office-acceptance, the Congress took decisions against Nehru's known views. The elections demonstrated the predominance of the Congress in India's political life. Office-acceptance provided opportunities for introduction of some reforms for the welfare of the people. The improvement of primary education through the introduction of 'Basic Education', enforcement of prohibition and stress on the removal of untouchability deserve special mention.

Congress and Subhas Chandra Bose

Subhas Chandra Bose, a brilliant student of Calcutta University, passed the I.C.S. examination in London, and was appointed to the Service. But he resigned immediately, returned home, and served his political apprenticeship under Chitta Ranjan Das. Influenced by Marxism, he had radical views and maintained contact with the revolutionaries (militant nationalists). At the Calcutta Congress session (1928) he opposed the demand for Dominion Status (based on the Nehru Report) and pleaded forcefully for complete independence. He had the highest regard for Gandhi, but he was unable to accept his ideology and policy of compromise. He felt extremely unhappy when Gandhi made a pact with Lord Irwin. He became the leading spokesman of the younger section of the Congress whose socialist views were out of tune with Gandhi's philosophy and programme.

Gandhi's position in the Congress since 1934 was without any precedent or parallel. He ceased to be even a primary member of the Congress; naturally he held no office. But he attended the meetings of the Working Committee and the All-India Congress Committee and took part in their discussions. As a matter of fact, no important decision was taken without

his approval. He was 'the power behind the throne'. He practically nominated the members of the Working Committee as also the President of the Congress. Nehru described him as 'permanent super-President of the Congress'. This was due to his unchallenged influence over the people.

Haripura Congress (1938)

Subhas Chandra Bose was unanimously elected President of the Haripura session of the Congress (February 1938). Some important resolutions were adopted. First, the people's struggle in the Princely States was assured of moral support, but it was not to 'be undertaken in the name of the Congress'. Such struggle, it was stated, should be led by 'independent organizations' in the States. Secondly, the *kisan* (peasant) movements organized by *Kisan Sabhas* sometimes violated the principles and programme of the Congress because they aimed at quick results. At Haripura the Congress declared that it 'cannot associate itself with any activities which are incompatible' with its 'basic principles'. It warned those 'Congressmen who, as members of the *Kisan Sabhas*, help in creating an atmosphere hostile to Congress principles and policy'. Thirdly, a resolution was passed, declaring that India 'could be no party to an imperialist war' and 'would not permit her man-power and resources to be exploited in the interest of British imperialism'. This was an anticipation of India's attitude towards war in Europe which appeared to be impending.

Tripuri Congress (1939)

Bose 'caused annoyance in Gandhian circles' by trying to 'stiffen the opposition of the Congress Party to any compromise with Britain'. He thought that a war between Britain and Germany was inevitable, and he hoped that it would enable India to exploit Britain's peril to secure freedom. Gandhi and Nehru, on the other hand, were definitely opposed to the idea of taking advantage of Britain's peril. After the Munich Pact (September 1938) Bose 'began an open propaganda throughout India in order to prepare the Indian people for a national struggle which should synchronize with the coming war in Europe'. But 'the Gandhites' were 'opposed to any national struggle' at a time when they were engaged in their 'ministerial and parliamentary work'. Again, Gandhi, who was opposed to industrialization, was annoyed when Bose formed the National Planning Committee (the forerunner of the Plan-

ning Commission established after the Transfer of Power) for drawing up a comprehensive plan of economic development on the basis of industrialization.

These differences created a crisis over the election of the President of the next session of the Congress. From 1920 to 1938 the election was a mere formality; Gandhi's nominees were always elected. In September 1938 it came to be known that Bose wanted election as President for a second term. Gandhi, who had chosen him for the Haripura session, was not prepared to give him a second term. Having failed to dissuade him, the Mahatma chose Pattabhi Sitaramayya and put his whole weight in favour of this comparatively little known candidate. Bose contested and won by a majority of 95 votes. Gandhi declared: 'The defeat is more mine than Pattabhi's'.

Gandhi's statement led many Congress delegates to desert Bose and to 'vote confidence in Gandhi and Gandhi's leadership'. The Congress session was held at Tripuri in March 1939. A resolution was passed, 'requesting the President to nominate the Working Committee in accordance with the wishes of Gandhiji'. As Gandhi refused to suggest any name Bose resigned (April 1939). 'The Gandhites' compelled the democratically elected President to resign by imposing on him a condition which was not in conformity with the Constitution of the Congress. Gandhi's refusal to help the President in fulfilling the condition precipitated the crisis.

Forward Bloc

Bose 'immediately proceeded to form a radical and progressive party within the Congress, with a view to rallying the entire left wing under one banner'. This party was called the 'Forward Bloc'. Its programme included certain items, such as *Satyagraha* in Bengal, which could not be approved by 'the Gandhites' who were now in full command of the Congress. On the charge of violating party discipline Bose was declared by the Working Committee 'disqualified' to be a member of any elective Congress Committee for three years as from August 1939. This meant virtual expulsion from the Congress. Undaunted, he held an Anti-Compromise Conference at which he declared: 'In the event of compromise being effected with imperialism in this country, Indian Leftists in the future will have to fight not only imperialism but its new fangled allies in India as well'. He suspected that Gandhi and his group were secretly negotiating with the British Government to accept the

Federal Scheme of the Act of 1935 with some modifications. He was convinced that India could not win freedom through such compromise. He thought that the best course for her would be open confrontation with British imperialism which was face to face with Hitler in Europe.

The British Government did not allow Bose time or opportunity to develop his programme. He was interned in his own residence in Calcutta, but he secretly left India in January 1941.

Towards confrontation

Bose's virtual expulsion from the Congress did not prepare the ground for an understanding between the Congress and the British Government. The crisis created by Hitler's War made it difficult for the Congress to avoid some kind of confrontation. The Congress Ministries could not co-operate with the British Government's war efforts in the absence of any British assurance of satisfying India's political aspirations. A grave constitutional crisis was created by the resignation of the Congress Ministries in seven provinces. It practically meant the collapse of the constitutional scheme of 1935. This form of non-co-operation caused some difficulties for the British Government, but the Governors took over the administration of the 'Congress provinces', and political support was available from the Muslim League led by Jinnah.

At the Ramgarh session of the Congress (March 1940), presided over by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, protest was recorded against the declaration of India 'as a belligerent country without reference to the people of India'. But there were serious differences among the Congress leaders in regard to the policy to be actually adopted to meet the crisis. Gandhi, with his unshaken faith in non-violence, was against India's participation in the War under any circumstances—not even for the sake of securing India's freedom. To most of his loyal colleagues, however, non-violence was not a creed but a political strategy. As Azad openly declared, the Congress 'was not a pacifist organization but one for achieving India's freedom'. The Working Committee was prepared to go back to the Ministries and 'to throw its full weight into the efforts for the effective organization of the defence of the country' on certain conditions which the British Government was not prepared to fulfil. Linlithgow made a gesture through the 'August Offer' (8 August 1940). The Congress interpreted it as 'proof of the Bri-

tish Government's determination to continue to hold India by the sword'.

In October 1940 the Congress took a hesitant step towards open confrontation with the British Government. Individual Civil Disobedience—not mass *Satyagraha*—was started under the leadership of Gandhi. The issue chosen by him was the right to preach openly against the War—not achievement of freedom for India. He said: 'We do not seek our independence out of Britain's ruin'. Nehru said that it 'would be an act derogatory to India's honour' to 'launch a Civil Disobedience campaign at a time when Britain is engaged in a life and death struggle'. Many thousands courted arrest, but Gandhi's movement had no impact at all on British policy.

The Atlantic Charter (August 1941), issued jointly by President Roosevelt of the United States and Prime Minister Winston Churchill of Britain, declared that these two Powers 'respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of Government under which they will live, and they wished to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them'. This statement raised hopes in India, but Churchill declared officially (September 1941) that the Atlantic Charter had no application to India—it was applicable only to countries ravaged by Hitler. This interpretation was not repudiated by Roosevelt. To the Congress it appeared to be a naked exposure of Britain's perfidy.

Japan's entry into the War (December 1941), and its unprecedented successes at Singapore (February 1942) as also in Malaya and Burma, brought India within the range of actual hostilities. The myth of British invincibility—particularly on the sea—was shattered. To many optimists it seemed that the end of the British Empire was imminent.

The gulf between Gandhi and the other leaders of the Congress was widened by this new crisis. He feared that Britain would now be forced by the Japanese threat to offer independence to India on condition of active co-operation in war efforts, and that the Congress would accept it. He was an unchanging pacifist, and his faith in 'perfidious Albion' was not shaken. But the Working Committee took a different view (December 1941). Gandhi was relieved of the responsibility of leading the Civil Disobedience Movement. The old policy of non-co-operation with the war-efforts was supplemented by arrangements to set up Congress organizations throughout the

country in order to help and serve the people in any contingency arising out of the threatened Japanese invasion.

After the Japanese occupation of Rangoon (March 1942) Churchill realized the desperate situation which faced Britain in the East. Roosevelt asked him to consider 'new relationship between Britain and India'. The result was the despatch of the Cripps Mission (March 1942). The negotiations failed; the political deadlock continued.

'Quit India' resolution

The failure of the Cripps Mission and the threat of Japanese invasion brought about an immediate and distinct change in Gandhi's attitude. In April 1942 he wrote that if Britain made an 'orderly and timely withdrawal' from India, Japan would probably leave India alone. If, however, Japan entered India even after the 'withdrawal' of the British, it would be the duty of the Indian people to offer non-violent resistance to the invaders. In May 1942 he pleaded that the British and the Indians should be 'reconciled to complete separation from each other', for 'the presence of the British in India is an invitation to Japan to invade India' and their 'withdrawal' would 'remove the bait'.

Having modified his old attitude in the light of new developments, Gandhi resumed active leadership of the Congress. At a meeting of the Working Committee (July 1942) he proposed a large-scale non-violent movement against the British and 'spoke of an open non-violent revolution'. On 14 July 1942 a long resolution, generally referred to as the 'Quit India' resolution, was adopted. Its essence was the demand that 'British rule in India must end immediately'. This was 'necessary not only in the interest of India but also for the safety of the world and for the ending of Nazism, Fascism, militarism and other forms of imperialism, and the aggression of one nation over another'. If, however, 'the present state of affairs' continued, 'the Congress will be reluctantly compelled to utilize all the non-violent strength it might have gathered since 1920'. The result would be a 'widespread struggle' under the leadership of Gandhi.

As the issues raised in the resolution were 'of the most vital and far-reaching importance to the people of India as well as to the peoples of the United Nations', the Working Committee referred the matter to the All-India Congress Committee which was to meet on 7 August 1942. The Committee passed it by an

overwhelming majority. Anticipating the arrest of all leading Congressmen the Committee laid down the following programme for going 'along the hard road where there is no resting place and which leads ultimately to the independence and deliverance of India': 'A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions, or for instructions to reach our people, and when no Congress Committee can function. When this happened, every man and woman who is participating in this movement must function for himself or for herself within the four corners of the general instructions issued'.

'Quit India' Movement (1942)

The meeting of the All-India Congress Committee terminated late at night on 8 August 1942. Before the next day dawned Gandhi, Nehru, Azad and all other top leaders of the Congress were arrested. Within a week almost every prominent Congressman in the country was in jail. The All-India Congress Committee and all Provincial Congress Committees (except in the North-West Frontier Province) were declared unlawful organizations. The police seized the Congress headquarters at Allahabad and confiscated the Congress funds. Rigorous press censorship was introduced.

Gandhi was detained in the Aga Khan's Palace at Poona till his release in May 1944. The other top leaders were imprisoned in the Ahmadnagar Fort till their release in May 1945.

The movement which followed the arrest of the leaders was based on three ideas of Gandhi which proved to be wrong. The first was that a Japanese invasion was imminent unless the British withdrew immediately. The second was that the British Government would not arrest the Congress leaders at once and they would have some time to organize the movement. The third was that the movement would run along non-violent lines. It was not till March 1944 that Japanese raiding columns entered Manipur from Burma. As the Congress leaders could make no arrangement before their arrest for the functioning of the Congress organization, the movement was started—and conducted—in a haphazard manner in different areas by different persons without any guidance from any central authority. The chaotic character of the movement made resort to violence inevitable. The non-official violence generated by the people's 'spontaneous revolution' synchronized with official violence. In course of suppressing the countrywide movement the British Government found that 'it had

made a profound miscalculation about the state of popular feeling and the hold of the Congress on the Indian public'.

Jayaprakash Narayan was 'the real leader of the movement, so far as there was any'. It covered all provinces except the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, and Sind, where it remained symbolic. According to the historian of the Congress, 250 railway stations were damaged or destroyed, 550 post offices were attacked and 50 burnt, telegraph and telephone wires were cut at 3,500 places, and 70 police stations and other Government buildings were burnt. The military casualties were 11 killed and 7 wounded. The police casualties were 900 killed and many injured. These figures are probably incomplete, but they indicate the type of the disturbances that occurred when the movement was at its height.

The duration of the movement was brief. Its back was broken by October 1942 as far as open activities were concerned; but underground activities—organized mainly by Jayaprakash Narayan—continued till the early months of 1943. He openly repudiated Gandhi's policy and preached the cult of violence and mass revolution which he regarded as consistent with the Congress resolution of 8 August 1942.

The official view was that 'the Congress produced, and to the best of its ability directed, widespread disorders amounting in some areas to nothing short of open rebellion'. Gandhi and Azad (Congress President) repudiated this charge in their letters to the Viceroy. The former laid 'the whole blame' at the door of the Government of India, saying that its 'leonine violence' pushed the people into acts of violence. Linlithgow suspected a link between violence and Vallabhbhai Patel who said that 'India switched over from non-violence to violent attempt to regain independence'.

Failure of 'Quit India' Movement

Like the Non-co-operation and the Civil Disobedience Movements, the 'Quit India' Movement failed to achieve any immediate political objective. But it was not a 'dismal failure', for it clearly expressed the Indian people's determination to be free and contributed to the feeling growing in the country that British rule could not survive for long. However, the tragic happenings of 1942 indicated that the withdrawal of the British was not to be secured by the 'Do or die' method recommended by Gandhi. The alternative method of large-scale military action, followed by Subhas Chandra Bose from beyond India's

frontiers, also failed. The 'Quit India' Movement was the last revolutionary struggle; it was, in a sense, the concluding chapter in the history of the Gandhian era. Freedom eventually came through negotiation and compromise at a time when Britain had been crippled by Hitler's blow and India's leadership had been taken over by Nehru and Patel.

Several factors explain the failure of the 'Quit India' Movement. Linlithgow was determined to crush the 'rebellion' and the official blow fell upon the 'rebels' with unexpected suddenness and severity. The Japanese in Burma did nothing to embarrass the Government of India even though there were violent disturbances in the eastern region. Secondly, the activities of the scattered groups of rebels were neither well-planned nor co-ordinated. But the official machinery of repression moved under directives issued from Delhi and was not weakened by differences on objectives and methods. Thirdly, no other organized political party came forward to support the movement. The Hindu Mahasabha repudiated the Congress policy; its fire was concentrated upon the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan, and its policy was 'to continue to sit on the fence and watch the results (of the War)'. Jinnah's condemnation of the movement was unequivocal. The Muslim League described it as an attempt 'to force the Mussalmans to submit and surrender to Congress terms and dictation'. It called upon the Muslims 'to abstain from any participation in the movement', and their response to this directive was total. The Communist Party actively opposed the movement. The 'rebels' found active allies among the militant revolutionary groups such as the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army in North India and the *Anushilan Samiti*, *Jugantar* party and *Bengal Volunteers* in Bengal. But these groups had different leaders and different policies, and their activities were not co-ordinated.

3. MUSLIM LEAGUE

Jinnah

Mohammad Ali Jinnah, a Bombay barrister, was educated in England and had 'an Englishness of manners and behaviour which endured to his death'. Naturally 'his mind, his ambition and his taste were directly influenced by the West'. He began his political career as a liberal nationalist in association with Dadabhai Naoroji and G. K. Gokhale. He was influenced

also by Surendra Nath Banerjee and Chitta Ranjan Das. He did not share the ideas of Sir Syed Ahmad and the Aligarh School. To further India's progress towards self-government through constitutional agitation was his objective. He did not think that if the British rulers left the country, Hindu *Raj* would be established. He was not afraid of democracy even though it implied the rule of the Hindu majority. He opposed the system of Separate Electorates at its early stage. He took no interest in the Khilafat Movement. He had no confidence in the leadership of the *ulama* who provoked communal feelings.

Jinnah gave up his liberal ideology at the initial stage of the Gandhian era. His aristocratic mind was repelled by the Non-co-operation Movement because it made a direct appeal to the masses and brought politics from the drawing room to the open field. As Jawaharlal Nehru wrote later: 'He felt completely out of his element in the Khadi-clad crowd demanding speeches in Hindustani. The enthusiasm of the people outside struck him as mob hysteria. There was as much difference between him and the Indian masses as between Savile Row and Bond Street and the Indian village with its mud huts'. This difference persisted till his death; but although he kept himself personally aloof from the Muslim masses, he did not hesitate in his later years to use the *ulama* and the *mullahs* in fostering among the Muslim peasantry a strong suspicion of Hindu hostility towards their faith and earthly interests. He made himself the spokesman of the upper and middle classes among the Muslims who were afraid of Hindu competition, but in advancing the interests of these classes he used the illiterate and fanatical Muslim peasantry as his soldiers and mobilized them under his banner in the name of Islam.

Jinnah's deep-rooted hostility to Gandhi was due to two factors: the *Mahatma's* views on religion and morality which implied close link between religion and politics, and his technique of *Satyagraha*, which involved mass struggle against the British Government. In later years Jinnah himself used religion for political purposes, but he could never convert himself into the active leader of any mass movement. Ambitious and intolerant of potential rivals, he realized that he had no prospect of leadership in the Gandhian Congress. This was at the root of his migration to the camp of communal politics.

Jinnah's new programme

The new phase in Jinnah's political career began in 1927 when, as President of the Muslim League, he endorsed a four-point programme ; (1) constitution of Sind, a Muslim-majority region in the Bombay Presidency, as a separate province ; (2) introduction of Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms in three Muslim-majority provinces: Sind, North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan ; (3) guarantee of Muslim majority in the Punjab and Bengal Legislatures ; (4) reservation of at least one-third of the seats in the Central Legislature for the Muslims who constituted about one-fourth of India's total population. His purpose was to ensure Muslim dominance in five provinces and a strong position for the Muslims at the Centre.

This was a prelude to Jinnah's 'Fourteen Points' (1929) which covered a much wider ground. The basic idea was the total rejection of the Nehru Committee Report. First, no unitary Constitution was to be acceptable to the Muslims ; there was to be a federal Constitution, framed in such a way as to ensure Muslim domination in five provinces (the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Baluchistan, Sind, Bengal). Secondly, Separate Electorates were to be retained and supplemented by other concessions, e.g., at least one-third Muslim representation in the Central Cabinet and in all provincial Cabinets, reservation of posts for Muslims 'in all services of the State', etc. The essence of Jinnah's programme was to strike a profitable bargain with the Hindus in any political settlement which the Congress might make with the British Government. He played the same game successfully later at the Round Table Conference.

Muslim League

Although the Muslim League was founded at Dacca in 1906, its leadership was always in the hands of the Muslims of the United Provinces. During the years 1919-22 the *ulama* began to play an important role in Muslim politics ; the Khilafat Movement increased their influence. When the movement collapsed as a political struggle their theological influence survived. Three important developments took place. The Muslim League, always dominated by rich and aristocratic leaders, seemed to offer them vast opportunities of acquiring honours, titles and influence. The Congress under Gandhi's leadership had become an organization for mass struggle. Neither its ideology nor its strategy suited the leaders of the Muslim

League. Secondly, there were serious communal riots in different parts of the country in the late twenties, and this had a tremendous effect on the psychology of both the communities. Thirdly, the trend in the Muslim community to think of itself as a separate political entity ('Nation'), which had been initiated by Sir Syed Ahmad and strengthened by Jinnah's 'Fourteen Points', found a highly respected expounder in Sir Mohammad Iqbal.

Iqbal

Sir Mohammad Iqbal (1878-1938) was a Punjabi Muslim, belonging to a family of Kashmiri origin. He was a man of varied interests and activities. He taught in the Punjab University, practised as a lawyer in the Punjab, and served as a member of the Punjab Legislative Council as also of the Round Table Conference. But he was primarily a philosopher and a poet. His ideas were deeply rooted in Islamic history and theology, and the rationalism of the West had little impact on him. His ideal was the recovery of what his community had lost in the religious, cultural and political spheres. This recovery could be accomplished, he thought, only in a Muslim State, for Islam recognized no separation between religion and politics. He wanted 'a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State'—within or without the British Empire. This would mean the amalgamation of the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Baluchistan and Sind into a single State. He excluded the Muslim-majority State of Kashmir (which was ruled by a Hindu prince) as also the Muslim-majority province of Bengal.

Iqbal did not want a unitary Central Government for India which, he thought, would mean 'permanent Hindu dominance in the whole of India'. He condemned the Federal Scheme of 1935 as 'completely hopeless' and pleaded for 'a separate federation of Muslim provinces'. The idea of two federations—one consisting of 'Muslim provinces' and the other of the Hindu-majority provinces—was clearly stated by him in 1937. He was (as Jinnah said in 1944) 'one of the few who originally thought over the feasibility of carving out of India such an Islamic State in the North-West and North-East zones which are historical homelands of Muslims'. But the 'North-East zone' did not come within the scope of Iqbal's political programme.

Plans for partition

Iqbal's idea of partitioning India into two federations was

developed in the thirties by a group of young Muslims at Cambridge (England) of which the most prominent member was Chaudhuri Rahmat Ali, a Punjabi Muslim. The basic idea of the 'Cambridge group' was as follows: 'India is not the name of a single country, nor the name of a single nation'. Therefore, the federal principle accepted by the Round Table Conference—envisaging the establishment of a single Federation comprising the whole of India—was to be rejected. The four provinces named by Iqbal, with the addition of Kashmir, were to be given 'a separate national status' and united in a Federation separated from the rest of India. This regional Federation was to be named 'Pakistan' ('P' for the Punjab; 'A' for Afghan province, i.e., North-West Frontier Province; 'K' for Kashmir; 'S' for Sind; 'tan' for Baluchistan). Little notice was taken of this scheme at the Round Table Conference; but propaganda continued, and in 1940 the Muslim League accepted the partition of India as its political goal.

Muslim politics (1934-1940)

Jinnah's 'Fourteen Points' (1929) did not secure for him the unquestioned leadership of the Muslims which he sought. The Muslim League, divided into two groups, lost much of its strength. Jinnah sank into frustration and settled in London to practise as a lawyer. In 1934 the Muslim League regained its unity and he returned home to assume its leadership. At that time there was no Muslim leader who could rival him in political experience and intellectual brilliance. Between 1928 and 1936 death took away all Muslim leaders of an all-India stature, such as Ajmal Khan, Mohammad Ali, M.A. Ansari, Sir Mohammad Shafi and Sir Fazli Hussain. Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan in the Punjab and Fazlul Huq in Bengal were provincial politicians. Abul Kalam Azad had become a full-fledged Congress leader. Thus the situation was favourable for Jinnah's emergence as the central figure in Muslim politics.

Jinnah's attitude towards the Act of 1935 represented continuity in Muslim politics: resistance to the scheme of Hindu-dominated Federation, and acceptance of Provincial Autonomy which would mean Muslim domination in four provinces (the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind, Bengal). The Presidential address at the Muslim League session in April 1936 contained the statement that the Hindus and the Muslims 'are not two communities but should be considered two nations in

many respects'. This was a revival of Sir Syed Ahmad's old theory.

The results of the provincial elections in 1937 under the Act of 1935 were extremely disappointing from Jinnah's point of view. Of 485 Muslim seats allotted to eleven provinces, the Muslim League secured only 108, the remaining seats (377) being won by other Muslim parties and groups. It failed to secure even a single seat in North-West Frontier Province and in Sind. In the Punjab it secured only one seat (out of 48) and in Bengal 40 seats (out of 117). Obviously the Muslim League could not form a Ministry in any of these four Muslim-majority provinces. In the Punjab it joined the Coalition Ministry led by Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan. In Bengal it joined the Coalition Ministry of Fazlul Huq.

The Congress Ministries in the Hindu-majority provinces included Muslim Ministers who were not members of the Muslim League. Jinnah found in this arrangement a plan of the Congress, which, he said, was 'nothing but a Hindu body', to show that 'Hindustan is for Hindus only'. Hardly had the Congress been in office for eight months before the Muslim League appointed a Committee to inquire into Muslim grievances in the 'Congress Provinces'. Its Report (*Pirpur Report*, November 1938) stressed several grievances such as interference with religious rites, the imposition of Hindi and the suppression of Urdu, and denial of legitimate representation in employment, etc. Coupland, a British historian, says: 'The complaints were not very numerous considering the vast areas concerned; many of them were of relatively trivial character; and similar incidents had been occurring from time to time for many years before the Congress Ministries were formed'. But the propaganda served Jinnah's political purpose; it attracted the Muslims towards the Muslim League and widened the gulf between them and the Hindus.

The Muslim League had always been an urban-based political organization and its aristocratic leaders had little contact with the masses. Jinnah realized that under any constitutional scheme based on the people's votes no political party could prosper without a firm rural base. He organized a mass contact campaign under the banner of the Muslim League. The name of religion and the services of *mullahs* were freely utilized. 'Volunteer Corps' and 'National Guard' were organized. The services of the *Khaksars*, a militant political party in the

Punjab, were secured. The ground was thus prepared for Jinnah's claim that the Muslim League was 'the one and the only organization of the Indian Muslims'. He wanted this claim to be recognized by the Congress so that the two organizations might be placed on a footing of equality, one representing the Hindus and the other the Muslims. The Congress did not recognize this claim, for there were Congress Muslims as also other Muslim parties, Jinnah described the Congress as 'Gandhi Hindu Congress'.

The resignation of the Congress Ministries in 1939 was celebrated by the Muslim League by observing a 'Day of Deliverance' (22 December 1939).

Pakistan Resolution (1940)

Several schemes for the partition of India were prepared by some Muslim politicians and professors during the years 1938-40. These fell into two categories: those providing for the creation of independent Muslim and non-Muslim States without any connecting link in the form of a central authority, and those contemplating the creation of autonomous provinces with a loose link in the form of a weak federal authority. The most extreme view was presented by Chaudhuri Rahmat Ali of the 'Cambridge group'. An independent Muslim State was to be constituted, comprising not only the Muslim-majority region in the north-west, but also Bengal and Assam ('Bang-i-Islam') and the Hyderabad State ('Usmanistan'). To this Muslim State was to be added 'proportional territory' from the Hindu-majority provinces. For example, in the United Provinces the Muslims formed about 15 per cent of the population; therefore, 15 per cent of its territory was to be ceded to the Muslim State. The name 'India' was to be replaced by 'Dinia'. 'Dinia' and its 'dependencies', including Ceylon, were to be organized as 'Pakasia'. This was the only way to save the *Millat* from 'Indianism' and to protect 'Pak Islamica'.

The Congress adopted a negative attitude towards these speculations on the country's most vital political problem. No reasoned analysis of objections to these proposals was offered on behalf of the Congress before the publication of Rajendra Prasad's *India Divided* in December 1945. By that time all chances of any effective appeal to the Muslims against partition were lost.

The resignation of the Congress Ministries in 1939 added to the weight of the Muslim League in British eyes. The 'Con-

gress provinces' came under the Governor's rule. The Ministries in the Muslim-majority provinces were more or less open to the influence and guidance of the Muslim League. It supported war-efforts while the Congress adopted a policy of ineffective non-co-operation.

Taking advantage of this situation the Muslim League adopted a resolution at its Lahore session (20 March 1940) which was moved by Fazlul Huq, the Prime Minister of Bengal who had formed the Ministry in 1937 as leader of the Krishak Praja Party. Its essence was that 'the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the north-western and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute independent States in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign'. The two 'regions' were to assume 'all powers such as defence, external affairs, communications, customs, and such other matters as may be necessary'. 'Adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards should be specifically provided in the Constitution for minorities'.

Jinnah, speaking in support of the demand for partition, did not explain its implications in terms of distribution of territories and constitutional arrangements. The word 'Pakistan' did not occur in the resolution although the 'Cambridge group' had coined it as early as 1933. The resolution was ambiguous. For instance, it was not clear whether the two 'independent (Muslim) States' were to form a permanent Federation or even a confederation. The actual areas to be included in these 'States' were not clearly specified by Jinnah till 1946. A convention of Muslim legislators (April 1946) demanded the establishment of 'a sovereign independent State' comprising Bengal, Assam, the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan. The word 'States' in the Lahore resolution was replaced by the word 'State', and for the first time Assam, which was not a Muslim-majority province, was claimed as a part of that 'State'.

Quit India' Movement

The Congress as also the Muslim League rejected Linlithgow's 'August Offer' (8 August 1940), but the reasons behind their decisions were different. The same thing happened in the case of the Cripps Proposals (March-April 1942) which both the Congress and the Muslim League rejected for different reasons.

Jinnah condemned the 'Quit India' Movement. The Muslim League directed the Muslims 'to abstain from any partici-

pation in the movement initiated by the Congress'. The Congress workers respected the sentiments of the Muslims; they gave no provocation, and as a result there was no Hindu-Muslim strife during the 'rebellion'.

4. BOSE AND I.N.A.

Bose's plan

While Gandhi and the members of the Congress Working Committee remained inactive behind prison walls, Subhas Chandra Bose gave an entirely new turn to India's struggle for freedom. He was convinced that the 'non-violent strength' acquired by the country under Gandhi's leadership could not make the British quit India. Though closely associated with the militant nationalists who used bombs and revolvers against the British, he realized that they were too weak to capture the British citadel. His plan was to utilise the difficulties of the British in the international situation in order to organize the Indian struggle on a large scale. As early as 1935, when he was in Vienna, he went to Berlin, met Hitler and discussed with him the possibility of war between Germany and England. Again, in 1938 the Government of India suspected that he had established contact with the German Consul in Calcutta. He made a far more realistic assessment of the gathering storm in Europe than Jawaharlal Nehru who formulated the views of the Congress on the international crisis.

Bose in Germany

After being forced out of the Congress in 1939 Bose organized the 'Forward Bloc'. Arrested in July 1940, he undertook a fast in jail and was released in December 1940; but he was detained at his own residence in Calcutta under strict surveillance by the police. He escaped secretly on 17 January 1941 and took a perilous journey to Moscow *via* Pashawar and Kabul. On 23 March 1941 he flew from Moscow to Berlin. There he secured German approval for two of his proposals: he would broadcast anti-British propaganda from Berlin, and he would raise 'Free India' units from Indian prisoners of war in Germany. The second item received an impetus when Germany declared war against Russia (22 June 1941). 'Free India' units were raised not only in Rome, Italy being an ally of Germany, but also in Paris which was then under German occupation. The full strength of the legion was 3,000.

Bose in Japan

After Japan's entry into the War (December 1941) Rashbihari Bose, an old Indian revolutionary who had taken political refuge in Japan and thereafter become a Japanese citizen, organized an *Indian Independence League* composed of Indians, living in South-East Asian countries which were then controlled by Japan. The Indian Independence League took a definite shape at a conference held at Bangkok in June 1942; Rashbihari Bose was elected its Chairman.

Meanwhile steps had been taken by Captain Mohan Singh, an Indian officer of the British Army in Malaya who had surrendered to the Japanese, to form an *Indian National Army* or *Azad Hind Fauz*. The nucleus was formed by volunteers from among the Indian prisoners of war who were handed over by the Japanese Government to Captain Mohan Singh. By August 1942 about 40,000 prisoners signed a pledge to join the I. N. A. under Mohan Singh. On 1 September the I. N. A. was formally established.

At the Bangkok Conference it was decided to invite Subhas Chandra Bose to come to East Asia. He arrived from Germany in Tokyo on 13 June 1943. To him Rashbihari Bose surrendered his power and position. The Japanese Government made an official declaration 'to extend all means in order to help to expel and eliminate from India the Anglo-Saxon influences which are the enemy of the Indian people, and enable India to achieve full independence in the true sense of the term'.

Subhas Chandra Bose came to Singapore (which was then under Japanese occupation) and assumed leadership of the Indian Independence League and the I. N. A. (July 1943). He was acclaimed as *Netaji*. He established a 'Provisional Government of Free India' at Singapore (21 October 1943) which was formally recognized by Germany, Italy and Japan.

March to India

The slogan prescribed by Bose for the I. N. A. was *Chalo Delhi* ('March to Delhi'). Acting in full co-operation with Japanese troops who had occupied Singapore, Malaya and Burma, the I. N. A. began its offensive in March 1944, and advanced through Burma as much as 150 miles into Indian territory. The national tricolour flag was planted on the Indian soil on 19 March 1944. But the progress of the I. N. A. was cut short by the British occupation of Rangoon in May 1944.

The I. N. A. men were disarmed and made prisoners. The Indian Independence Movement in South-East Asia collapsed. After surrender of Japan to the Allies (August 1945) Bose went to Taipai in Formosa where, it is said, he died in an air crash (18 August 1945).

I. N. A. Trial and Naval Mutiny (1945-46)

About 20,000 Indian soldiers of the British Army—who were originally prisoners of war in the hands of the Japanese and had subsequently joined the I. N. A.—were rounded up after the collapse of the Japanese army in Burma. In Delhi Lord Wavell's Government decided to penalize them. As a first step a Military Tribunal was constituted to consider charges of waging war against the King and of practising brutalities against many of their fellow soldiers to induce them to join the I.N.A. Three officers of the I. N. A.—one Hindu, one Muslim, one Sikh—were selected for public trial, and it was held at the historic Red Fort in Delhi. From the Indian point of view the I. N. A. was a patriotic legion fighting for the liberation of the Motherland. The Congress took up the defence of the accused, and the panel of lawyers set up to argue the case included Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Bhulabhai Desai and Jawaharlal Nehru. Even the Muslim League associated itself with the defence. Popular sympathy for the accused rose to the highest pitch throughout India. The Government of India 'quailed before the storm'. The accused were convicted; but the sentence of transportation for life was remitted, and the only punishment inflicted on them was dismissal from the Army. The popular enthusiasm aroused by the trial contributed substantially to the sweeping victory of the Congress in elections to the Central and Provincial Legislatures in 1945-46.

In February 1946 occurred the mutiny of a section of Indians serving in the Royal Indian Navy. It was a protest against 'untold hardships regarding pay and food, the most outrageous racial discrimination', and the commanding officer's derogatory references to Indian national character. However, political motives aggravated the grievances and the mutiny was an aspect of nationalist aspirations. Serious disturbances occurred in Bombay. 'The Army and the Air Force were not altogether unaffected'. Within a few days the mutineers, advised by Vallabhbhai Patel, surrendered.

Bose's contribution to India's freedom

That Subhas Chandra Bose rendered great services to the nation in its struggle for freedom is evident from his election as President of the Congress in two successive years. He helped the militant nationalists in different ways. His views on economic questions were far more progressive than those of the older Congress leaders. He initiated the idea of economic planning which the Congress took up seriously when it came to power. His determination to eliminate the policy of compromise from the programme of the Congress led to his expulsion from the Congress. Undaunted, he established the Forward Bloc which is now an important Leftist political organization. His political idealism had a mystic element. He was far above communalism and parochialism; Indians speaking different regional languages and professing different creeds joined the I. N. A. The organization of the I. N. A. testifies to his magnetic personality and unique capacity for leadership. His journeys from Calcutta to Moscow and from Germany to Japan were adventures unprecedented in Indian history.

The Indian Communists, who regarded the Allies' struggle against the Axis Powers as a 'People's War', condemned Bose as a 'traitor'. He was a 'traitor' indeed—not to his country but to its foreign rulers. The Congress did not look upon his political-cum-military adventure with approval, and his close association with Japan raised many misgivings. It was, of course, far from his intention to change masters—to replace the British by the Japanese. His sole purpose was to liberate India with the assistance of Britain's enemies. The determination of Gandhi and Nehru not to exploit the difficulties of Britain for India's advantage drove him out of the Congress. When the British Government tried to cripple his political activities by imprisonment and detention, he left the country and jumped into an uncertain future. He left for the Indian people a tradition of reckless courage, exciting romance and noble patriotism.

The I. N. A., organized and actively led by Bose, failed in its immediate objective. It was never a really effective fighting force. It took the field too late; the Axis Powers were in retreat by 1944. Yet 'it occupies an important place in the history of India's struggle for freedom'. It played an important role in stimulating the Indian people's craving for freedom. Its organization was an ominous indication that the British could

no longer count upon the unflinching loyalty of the Indian sepoys in maintaining their hold on India. The popular agitation against the I.N.A. trial, as also the Naval Mutiny, were alarming symptoms from the British point of view. Thus, a new military factor emerged in the formulation of British policy towards India's struggle for freedom.

5. LEFTIST PARTIES

International Communism

Between 1853 and 1857 Karl Marx and Engels wrote a large number of articles analysing the nature of British imperialist misrule which, according to the former, was laying the foundation of a socio-economic revolution in India. Early in the present century Lenin wrote that in India the proletariat had already developed a conscious mass struggle, and, consequently, the 'Russian-style British regime' in India was doomed. During the First Great War he felt that its most important effect would be the emancipation of the colonial countries, including India, which would ultimately bring about a world-wide proletarian revolution.

The October Revolution (1917) in Russia and the overthrow of the Czarist regime 'electrified the democratic and liberal world'. Marxist literature 'found its way to the bookshelves of the educated few'. They were influenced by Lenin's declaration that the revolutionary movement of the people of the East could develop effectively only in direct association with Soviet Russia's revolutionary struggle against International Imperialism. Thus Communism in India had its origin as a part of International Communism which was at that time controlled by Russia through the 'Comintern'. Its later development followed the same line. Its method was violence. Philip Spratt declared in the Meerut Conspiracy Case: '... in the course of attainment of our aims and the establishment of communism we shall have to indulge in brutal dictatorial methods. We shall have to indulge in Civil War in most countries'. The Communist ideology of class struggle had no roots in Indian thought and was inconsistent with Gandhism.

M. N. Roy

Manabendra Nath Roy, better known as M. N. Roy, identified Gandhi with the feudal class interests in India and held that the Nationalist Movement organized by the Congress

had neither any ideology nor any revolutionary programme. His original name was Narendra Nath Bhattacharya. Born in 1889 in an orthodox Brahmin family in a village not far from Calcutta, he joined the *Jugantar* group of militant nationalists. With a view to collecting arms he visited Java, Malaya, Indonesia, Indo-China, the Philippines, Japan, Korea and China and arrived at San Francisco in the United States in 1916. In America he read the works of Marx and 'discovered the new meaning in them'. After the entry of the United States into the war against Germany he escaped to Mexico to avoid arrest as a German spy. There he met Mikhail Borodin (1919) who had gone to the New World as the first emissary of the newly founded 'Communist International'. Thus began Roy's direct association with the International Communist Movement. He accompanied Borodin to Russia (1919) and played an important role at the Second Congress of the Communist International held in Moscow (1920). Within a few months he left Moscow for Tashkent with arms, money and followers belonging to different countries who composed 'the first International Brigade of the Red Army'. There he met some Muslim *Mujahids* who had left India for Afghanistan in the wake of the Khilafat Movement. They accepted Marxism as their political creed.

The Communist Party of India was formed at Tashkent towards the end of 1920 or early in 1921. Returning to Moscow, Roy took part in the Third Congress of the Communist International (1921) which put stress on the necessity of formation of indigenous Communist Parties in countries where there was none. Roy set out to contact scattered Communist groups in different parts of India. His purpose was to bring them together both ideologically and organizationally and link them directly to the Communist International. He directed them to organize two parties: 'a mass party, to be called Workers' and Peasants' Party' which would work openly, and 'an illegal Communist Party' which would work in secret. The two parties were to be linked through common members. But all efforts in this direction suffered a serious set back when some leading Communists were prosecuted and punished (Kanpur Conspiracy Case, 1924). As Roy was then in Europe he could not be brought to trial. In spite of this blow, as also of sharp differences among the Communist leaders, a Central Committee of the Communist Party of India was formed and its Constitution

was published in 1925-26. In 1930 the Party was formally affiliated to the Communist International. Meanwhile Roy had been sent by the Comintern on a mission to China (1927) and, consequently, he was practically cut off from the Communists in India.

Meerut Conspiracy Case (1929-33)

Philip Spratt, a leader of the Communist Party in Britain, came to India in 1926. He tried to organize a Workers' and Peasants' Party and to secure infiltration of the Communists into the Congress. Workers' and Peasants' Parties were formed in Bengal, Bombay, the Punjab and United Provinces. These organizations worked as a projection of the Communist Party till the Meerut Conspiracy Case (1929-33). Almost all the prominent Communist leaders were tried at Meerut (in United Provinces); of them, as many as 27 were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. However, by 1935 all the accused were set free. The trial attracted the sympathetic attention of the Indian nationalists. Jawaharlal Nehru, who as a lawyer fought for the accused, described the trial as 'one phase of the offensive which the Government here has started against the Labour Movement'.

In the course of the trial the ideals and methods of the Communists received wide publicity. On this ground some Communists thought that the Meerut Case 'placed Communism on a sure footing in India'. But the Communist Party suffered a heavy blow by the sudden removal of almost all its prominent leaders from the field of action. Factional quarrels among different groups weakened the party organization. M. N. Roy, who had been expelled by the Russians from the Communist Party, returned to India in 1930 and made a bid for the leadership of the revolutionary movement in India.

Communists as ultra-Leftists

Meanwhile, the ultra-Leftist ideology, based on the experience of the Communists in China in their struggle against Chiang Kai-shek, had been imposed on the Indian Communists by the Comintern. 'The CPI's course was now authoritatively mapped out; it was to dissolve any remnant of the Workers' and Peasants' Party, sever connections with all elements of the bourgeoisie, and launch a full-scale attack against Gandhi, Nehru, and the Indian National Congress'. In a document published in December 1930 the Congress was described as 'a class organization of the Capitalists working against the funda-

mental interests of the toiling masses of our country'. The main object of the CPI was to be 'the confiscation without compensation of all lands, forests and other property of the landlords, ruling princes, churches, the British Government, officials and money-lenders and handing them over to the toiling peasantry, cancellation of slave agreements and all the indebtedness of the peasantry to money-lenders and banks'. Naturally there could be no compromise between the counter-revolutionary nationalist leadership and the revolutionary Communist leadership of the exploited masses.

This statement was 'a bill of divorcement' between the CPI guided by the ideal of International Communism, and the main nationalist movement led by Gandhi. When the Civil Disobedience Movement swept the country (1930-33) the Communists tried 'to weaken and sabotage the greatest mass campaign India had so far seen'. They failed to understand its implications as an ant-imperialist struggle. M. N. Roy was opposed to this ultra-Leftist policy. His plan was to 'impregnate the Congress with his own views'. He attended the Karachi session of the Congress (March 1931) and probably took an important part in drafting the resolution on Fundamental Rights and Economic policy which was adopted there. Arrested in July 1931, he remained in prison till November 1936. Meanwhile the Government of India had formally declared the CPI as an illegal political organisation.

Change in CPI's policy

Immediately after Hitler's seizure of the office of President in Germany (August 1934) Russia realized that she could not remain in isolation in international politics in the face of the rising tide of Fascism. She joined the League of Nations (September 1934), took up the cause of disarmament and collective security, shelved all anti-democratic campaigns in other countries, and adopted the policy of united resistance of Communists, Socialists and Liberals against Fascism. This sudden shift in Russian foreign policy was followed by abandonment of the Comintern's ultra-Left policy of opposition towards the nationalist movements in the countries subject to foreign colonial rule. After the Seventh Congress of the Communist International (1935) it was decided that the Indian Communists should try to oust the Right-reactionary leadership of the Congress and join its left wing represented by the newly formed Congress Socialist Party. The

object in view would be to transform the Congress into a mass platform of anti-imperialist national revolutionary movement.

Congress Socialist Party

A Leftist ideology, which was generally incompatible with Gandhi's philosophy, developed in the Congress in the twenties. Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose were its principal spokesmen, but Gandhi won over Nehru and got him elected as President of the Congress in 1929. At the Karachi session of the Congress (1931) the Leftists within the organization had the satisfaction of getting it to pass a resolution on Fundamental Rights and Economic Policy which was drafted by Nehru, probably with the assistance of M. N. Roy. This 'represented a new outlook for the Congress'; it decided for the first time that 'political freedom must include real economic freedom'.

A Socialist Party was formed in Bihar in 1931 and in the Punjab in 1933. A full-fledged all-India Socialist Party was formed in 1934. Among its early leaders were Jayaprakash Narayan, Asoka Mehta, Achyut Patwardhan, Yusuf Meherally and Narendra Dev. Its programme was based on the principle that the Congress, with all its shortcomings, was the greatest revolutionary force in the country. So the new Party remained within the Congress; but it aimed at the complete independence of India, involving separation from the British Empire, and 'the establishment of a Socialist society'. Its plan of action was to mobilize the peasants and the workers against both British colonialism and 'the forces of native reaction'.

United anti-imperialist Front

The Congress Socialist Party, according to Jayaprakash Narayan, 'grew out of the very heart of the national movement', and although it recognised the Congress as the mainstream of that movement, it 'put Socialism on the political map of India'. Naturally there was no question of the Party's affiliation to the Communist International. It differed with the CPI on the questions of attitude towards the Congress, the trade union movement, and the possibility of unity among different groups. But the CPI, led mainly by P. C. Joshi, found it expedient to utilize the Congress Socialist Party as an ally in an anti-imperialist Front. The Congress Socialist Party decided to admit Communists in its ranks, and taking advantage of this opportunity a large number of Communists accepted its membership. As the Communists could not function openly in the name of the

CPI, which was an illegal organization, they found it very convenient to work under cover of their membership of the Congress Socialist Party. They infiltrated also into the main Congress organization. Some Communists became members of the All-India Congress Committee.

This 'Trojan Horse' policy could not be continued for long. Some secret documents of the Communist Party came to light, and these clearly showed that it was utilizing the United Front for its own purposes. An attempt on the part of the Communists to capture the National Executive of the Congress Socialist Party (1938) opened the way to a definite rupture. In 1940 the Communists were expelled from the Congress Socialist Party and the United Front was dissolved.

Second Great War

The Stalin-Hitler Pact (August 1939) puzzled the Communists; but, following instructions from Moscow, they diverted attack on British imperialism. Another change of policy occurred their attention from Hitler's Fascism and concentrated their red when Hitler, setting aside the Pact, invaded Russia (June 1941). 'Russia, the fountain source of world Communism, and the determinant of its policy, was now forced to ally herself with the capitalist countries, and the international Communist policy had to be suitably altered'. In July 1941 the Communists declared that Russia was fighting a 'just war' and the people of India should support her struggle against Fascism. On 15 December 1941 they proclaimed the 'key slogan' of their party: 'Make the Indian people play a people's role in the "people's" war'. As Britain was now Russia's ally, there would be no struggle against British imperialism. Within two years British imperialism became successively the chief target of the Indian Communists and their ally. The political situation in India was judged in the light of Russia's interest. The British Government, embarrassed by the refusal of the Congress to co-operate in war-efforts, welcomed the CPI's *volte face*. In July 1942 the Communist leaders who were in prison were released, and the ban against the CPI was lifted.

The Congress Socialists took a different view. They adopted an uncompromising anti-War policy and strongly condemned the Communist thesis of 'People's War'. A true 'People's War', they held, should be the struggle of a subject people against colonialism for national liberation. 'It should lead to the des-

truction of both Imperialism of Capitalist Democracy and of Fascism'.

During the 'Quit India' Movement the Congress Socialists fought strenuously against British imperialism; Jayaprakash Narayan played a crucial role. They did not follow Gandhi's ideal of non-violence, but they continued to recognize the Congress as the symbol of national leadership. The Communists played an entirely opposite role. They did their best to help the British Government in India. They 'acted as stooges and spies of the British Government and helped them against their own countrymen fighting for freedom'. There is documentary evidence to show that 'an alliance existed between the Politbureau of the Communist Party and the Home Department of the Government of India, by which P. C. Joshi was placing at the disposal of the Government of India the services of his Party members'. He supplied information to the military and police authorities. Through its control over the All-India Trade Union Congress the Communist Party 'exerted its utmost to keep the workers out of the national unrest' so that industrial production might not be disturbed during the War. It exhorted the peasants not to clamour for land reforms but to co-operate with the landlords. It supported Jinnah's demand for Pakistan.

'The profoundly pro-British orientation of their war-time policy exposed the Communists to the odium of the entire Indian public opinion'. When the War ended they 'stood at bay, thoroughly isolated from the national movement'. When Independence came they realized that there was little prospect of a violent revolution in India. They entered Parliamentary politics, opposed the Congress Governments in and out of the Legislatures, and sought to seize power through the votes of the people.

The Congress Socialists earnestly wanted an early settlement of the communal problem, but they were strongly opposed to the partition of the country. They regarded the acceptance of the Mountbatten Plan by the Congress as an 'act of surrender'.

Labour Movement : Trade Unions

The demand of some social workers in Bombay for factory legislation in the seventies of the last century was the beginning of the trade union movement. The Bombay Millhands' Association, formed in 1890, was probably the first working class union in India. When the Factory Commission of 1890 was

set up it was officially recognized that the workers' viewpoint should be ascertained before any measure of labour legislation was taken up. In Eastern India the cause of the tea plantation workers and jute mill workers was taken up by political leaders like Surendra Nath Banerjee and some prominent social workers. There were several strikes in Bombay and Bengal in the early years of the present century.

During the First Great War the number of factory workers increased considerably, and they became aware of their 'strategic importance' in the economic life of the country. Poor working conditions, specially in newly established factories, and the rise in prices of ordinary consumer goods, created fresh discontent among them. Moreover, they were influenced by the political unrest in the country and—after 1917—by revolutionary ideas which filtered into India from Russia.

The first Indian Trade Union of the modern type was the Madras Labour Union—a textile industry union—formed in 1918. The Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association was founded in 1920. Trade Unions were also formed in the cotton mills of Bombay. A wave of strikes during the years 1918-20 indicated a new militancy in the working class. The Whitley Commission observed: 'The two or three years following the close of the War saw the formation of a large number of organizations, owing their origin mainly to the grave economic difficulties of industrial labour. The world-wide uprising of labour consciousness extended to India, and for the first time the mass of industrial workers awoke to their disabilities, specially in regard to wages and working hours, and to the possibility of combination. The effect of this upsurge was enhanced by political turmoil which added to the prevailing feeling of unrest and assisted to provide willing leaders of a trade union movement'.

The establishment of the International Labour Organisation in 1919 and India's membership of this Organisation hastened the formation of a common forum for all Trade Union workers in India. The *All-India Trade Union Congress* was formed in 1920. The era of effective trade union movement in India began as this organisation gave a cohesive character to earlier isolated efforts. 'The working class in India did not fail to realize the importance of the right (to form trade unions) which was bestowed on them and the harm that would be done

if they did not organize themselves in order to exercise that right'.

The early leaders of the trade union movement included Lajpat Rai (who presided over the first session of the All-India Trade Union Congress), N. M. Joshi, and V. V. Giri who ended his long political career as President of India. The All-India Trade Union Congress remained the central organization of the working class until the coming of Independence. During its early years it maintained close contact with the Congress, for it was realized that the workers had a great role to play in the struggle for freedom. The Indian trade union movement was deeply influenced by the social-democratic ideas of the British Labour Party; the Communist conception of seizure of political power by the working class through violent revolution was rejected. N. M. Joshi thought that the political activities of the trade unions should be confined to movements for amelioration of economic grievances. Gandhi was opposed to workers' participation in political movements; he believed in class-collaboration between capitalists and workers.

M. N. Roy described the All-India Trade Union Congress as a 'strange conglomeration of Nationalism, Utopianism and Reformism'. With a view to securing 'the economic freedom of the producing classes' he envisaged 'a long and bitter struggle'. Following this idea the Communists formed a large number of labour unions all over the country. In 1927 they made determined attempts to capture the All-India Trade Union Congress 'with a view to wrest it from its bourgeois leadership'. 'They emerged as a distinct group with their own tactics, programme and ideology'. In 1929 they succeeded in securing the approval of the All-India Trade Union Congress to its affiliation to the Third International in Moscow. This led to a split; the moderates, led by N. M. Joshi, left the All-India Trade Union Congress and formed a new organization called *All-India Trade Union Federation*. But the Communists had differences among themselves. The result was another split in the All-India Trade Union Congress in 1931; some Communists formed a new organization called the *Red Trade Union Congress*.

By 1934 the Communists were weakened by three developments: the imprisonment of some of their leaders after trial in the Meerut Conspiracy Case, the formation of the Congress Socialist Party, and the declaration of the Govern-

ment of India which made the Communist Party an illegal organization. The Congress Socialist Party tried more or less successfully to forge a united front of labour organizations. However, differences on two vital issues—interpretation of the concept of class-struggle and affiliation to the international labour organizations—persisted among the Communists.

During the period between the two Great Wars the growth of trade unions was speeded up despite divergence of views among the nationalists and the Communists. In 1926 the Trade Unions Act provided for the registration of trade unions on a voluntary basis. At that time there were about 60 trade unions; by 1940-41 the number of registered trade unions rose to 727. The final breach between the nationalists and the Communists in the All-India Trade Union Congress came in 1942. The former treated the Second Great War as an imperialist war; the latter treated it as a 'People's War', arguing that the entry of Soviet Russia as a belligerent against Germany had changed the character of the struggle. The All-India Trade Union Congress fell under the domination of the Communists. In 1946 a Committee appointed by the Government of India recognized this organization as the most representative central federation of Indian trade unions. The Indian National Congress withdrew its followers from the All-India Trade Union Congress in 1946, and following its advice, they established the *Indian National Trade Union Congress* in 1947 just before Independence.

The leadership of the All-India Trade Union Congress came from the middle-class intelligentsia. Some of them were associated with the Indian National Congress, some with the Communist Party; but there were non-party individuals as well. Very few of them were revolutionaries. Some of them were influenced by the model provided by the British Trade Union Congress. One of the early trade union leaders, V. V. Giri, a Congressman who founded the All-India Railwaymen's Federation and became President of the All-India Trade Union Congress in 1926, was elected President of India in 1969.

Peasant Movements

During the decade following the First Great War growing unrest among the peasantry took shape in movements in which economic and political factors were intermingled. The struggle of the peasantry for amelioration of long-standing grievances was directed against those classes which exploited them as also

against the foreign Government which gave them protection through legislative and administrative measures. In its second aspect it was a part of the national struggle for freedom. In fact, it was the Non-co-operation Movement which had drawn the peasants into that struggle as sympathisers and accessories. As in the case of the trade union movement, so also in the case of the peasant movements, the leadership came from the middle-class intelligentsia which had close links with the Congress and—in later years—with the Communist Party.

The struggles launched by Gandhi in Champaran (Bihar) in 1917 and in Kaira (Gujarat), based on the principle of *Satyagraha*, marked the beginning of a new era. The Congress adopted a resolution in 1920, calling for a 'no-tax' campaign and urging the peasants to join the freedom movement. In the United Provinces tenant struggle flared up in the twenties. It merged with the Non-co-operation Movement and spread to different areas; the main causes were bad harvests and fall in agricultural prices. The Congress launched a 'no-rent' campaign at Bardoli in Gujarat in 1930. It was directed against the Government, but in the United Provinces the movement was directed against the landlords.

The advent of the Communist Party initiated a new phase of peasant movement. It preached radical ideas of an agrarian revolution whereas the Congress aimed at curbing the privileges of landlords without overthrowing the existing land-systems. *Kisan Sabhas* were formed in some provinces; but these were weak, and there was no concerted movement under the flag of a central organization. As the Congress insisted upon compromise with the landlords and the Communists paid greater attention to industrial workers, the peasants remained more or less isolated from the political movements led by the two parties.

Under the Act of 1935 a section of the peasants were enfranchised for the first time. Different political parties began to woo them for their votes; naturally they gave up their traditional attitude of submissiveness to the upper classes of the society and 'there were stirrings of a new life' in the villages.

A conference of *Kisan* organizations, held at Lucknow in 1936 under the presidentship of Swami Sahajananda Saraswati, laid the foundation of the *All-India Kisan Congress*. A manifesto issued by this new central organization declared that the *Kisan* movement stood for the achievement of economic and political power for the producing masses through active parti-

cipation in the struggle for national freedom. The long-term programme included the abolition of the zamindari system and vesting of land in the tillers. The short-term programme centred round the removal of the most pressing grievances of the peasantry, e.g., reduction of rent, improvement of irrigation facilities, etc.

At first the Indian National Congress was reluctant to recognize the right of the peasants to form a separate organization outside the national political organization. This right was conceded at the Haripura session of the Congress (1938) held under the Presidentship of Subhas Chandra Bose, who declared that the formation of peasant organizations 'had a historical necessity' behind it. Meanwhile, the peasants were disappointed by the poor performance of the Congress Ministries in the matter of agrarian reforms. Leftist ideas gained ground; in 1938 the All-India Kisan Congress changed its name to *All-India Kisan Sabha* and adopted the Red Flag as the symbol of peasants' struggle. The Communist Party of India looked upon the *Sabha* as a 'subsidiary'. This attitude of the Communists alienated the non-Communist leaders of the peasants. Swami Sahajananda Saraswati resigned from the Kisan Sabha in 1945. At the end of the Second Great War both the Congress and the Congress Socialist Party promoted their own peasant organizations, and the Communists found themselves almost alone in the Kisan Sabha.

In Bengal the Fazlul Haq Ministry (1937-43) took steps to curtail the rights of the landlords and to relieve the peasantry of the burden of debt. It also appointed a *Land Revenue Commission* which recommended the abolition of the Permanent Settlement. This recommendation was implemented by Dr. B. C. Roy's Ministry (Congress) in West Bengal in 1953.

FREEDOM AND PARTITION (1942-47)

1. 'AUGUST OFFER' (1940)

By the end of 1939 it was clear that the constitutional structure contemplated in the Act of 1935 was no answer to India's political problem. The Federal Scheme was dead. Provincial Autonomy had broken down in six Congress-governed provinces; only three Muslim-majority provinces (Bengal, the Punjab, Sind) continued under responsible government.

The Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, realized the significance of the developing deadlock. In his statement of 17 October 1939 he declared that the British Government would be 'prepared', at the end of the War, 'to regard the scheme of the Act (of 1935) as open to modification in the light of Indian views'. On 10 January 1940 he stated in a speech that it was intended to 'expand the Executive Council of the Governor-General by the inclusion of a small number of political leaders'. In reply (March 1940) the Congress insisted upon two points: complete independence and the framing of a new Constitution—based on 'independence, democracy and national unity'—by a representative Constituent Assembly. Jinnah declared that any Constituent Assembly would be 'a second and larger edition of the Congress', and the Muslim League could not take part in it. The 'Pakistan Resolution' (March 1940) laid down the political objective of the Muslim League, i.e., the partition of India. Thus, the fundamental differences between the Congress and the British Government, and between the Congress and the Muslim League, had taken shape by early 1940.

In May 1940 the German victories on the European continent led to the formation of a new Ministry in England with Winston Churchill as Prime Minister and Leopold Amery as Secretary of State for India. To secure India's active co-operation in the struggle against Hitler, Linlithgow met Jinnah, Gandhi, Savarkar (the Hindu Mahasabha leader) and the Jam Sahib of Nawanagar (Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes) in June 1940. The differences between the Congress and the Muslim League remained unresolved. In this uncertain situation Linlithgow made an announcement (8 August 1940) which

came to be known as the 'August Offer'. First, a certain number of 'representative Indians' would be invited to join the Governor-General's Executive Council, and a War Advisory Council, composed of 'representatives of the Indian States and other interests in the national life of India as a whole', would be established. Secondly, the British Government would not transfer power 'to any system of Government whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements in India's national life'. This was really an assurance to the Muslims that no constitutional system which they did not accept would be established. Thirdly, the principle that the primary responsibility of framing a new Constitution should rest on the Indians was accepted, subject to the 'due fulfilment of the obligations which Britain's long connection with India has imposed on her'. But actual Constitution-making would begin after the War.

The Congress rejected the 'August Offer'. The Muslim League rejected the most important part of it, viz., the expansion of the Executive Council. Yet the Executive Council was expanded in July 1941; the new Indian members did not represent either the Congress or the Muslim League. At the same time a National Defence Council was constituted. It consisted of about 30 members including persons from the Princely States and the British Indian provinces as well as spokesmen of 'other elements in the national life of British India'. The Congress did not join it. Some members of the Muslim League initially joined; but a few among them resigned in accordance with Jinnah's directive, and those who refused to resign were expelled from the Muslim League.

2. CRIPPS PLAN (1942)

Global War

Japan's attack on Pearl Harbour (7 December 1941) gave Hitler's War a truly global character. The United States with its immense resources and vigour unaffected by the direct impact of the War, became a belligerent. Russia, suffering heavily from Hitler's attack which had begun on 22 June 1941, found the Anglo-American supply routes to Vladivostok, her port in the Far East, cut off by the Japanese navy. China under Chiang Kai-shek, struggling against Japan since 1937, was encircled by the Japanese. The beginning of Japan's invasion of

Burma (20 January 1942), the fall of Singapore (15 February 1942) as also of Rangoon (8 March 1942), the occupation of the Andaman Islands (23 March 1942), and the air raids on Vizagapatam and Cocanada (6 April 1942) brought the War to India's door.

What was involved in this unprecedented military crisis was not only the defence of India but also of China which was an essential part of the war against Japan. The essence of the Allied strategy in the eastern zone of the War was: 'India must be held not only for herself but for China also'. It was through India that essential supplies could be sent to Chiang Kai-shek's forces. Ousted by the Japanese from the Philippines, the Americans converted India into the base of their operations in South-East Asia.

Background of Cripps Mission

Military necessity was the determining factor in American and Chinese interest in the solution of the constitutional deadlock in India, for this alone could secure India's full co-operation in war-efforts.

Chiang Kai-shek and his wife came to India in February 1942. He met Linlithgow and suggested that the British Government should 'offer India a firm promise of Dominion Status'. He met Abul Kalam Azad (President of the Congress) and Nehru, and advised them to accept Dominion Status. At the end of his visit he appealed publicly to the people of India to 'whole-heartedly join the Allies'. At the same time he expressed the hope that Britain 'will as speedily as possible give them real political power'. Winston Churchill, a Conservative diehard who was then Prime Minister of Britain, took objection to the Chinese leader's apparent attempt to 'intervene as a kind of impartial arbitrator' between the British Government and the Congress. Chiang Kai-shek 'deferred to his wishes'; he failed to make any impact on British policy.

The deadlock in India was a matter of concern not only for China but also for the United States. The Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate felt that 'the Indians would not have the desire to fight just in order to prolong England's mastery over them'. President Roosevelt negotiated with Churchill, and cabled a message to him on 11 March 1942, suggesting the setting up of 'a temporary Dominion Government' in India, 'headed by a small representative group, covering different castes, occupations, religions and geographies'. A Draft Decla-

ration on these lines was already under consideration in London. It was finalized in early March 1942; but instead of publishing it at once, it was decided to send Sir Stafford Cripps to India to negotiate with Indian political leaders. This decision was announced in Parliament by Churchill on 11 March 1942.

Cripps Proposals

Cripps arrived in New Delhi on 22 March 1942. He was an eminent lawyer, a leading member of the Labour Party and a Member of Britain's War Cabinet. He was no stranger to India's constitutional problem. He had come to India in November 1939 and discussed it with the Congress leaders.

On arrival in New Delhi as the spokesman of the 'Home' Government Cripps held preliminary talks with Linlithgow, the Members of his Executive Council, and other official advisers. Then he interviewed the leaders of various political parties, groups and communities as also some spokesmen of the Princely States. On 29 March 1942 the Draft Declaration was released to the public. This was followed by further discussions with Indian leaders. On 11 April 1942 he announced that the Draft Declaration was withdrawn. The next day he left for London.

The Draft Declaration stated that the British Government's 'object' was 'the creation of a new Indian Union which shall constitute a Dominion, associated with the United Kingdom and the other Dominions by a common allegiance to the Crown, but equal to them in every respect, in no way subordinate in respect of any aspect of its domestic or external affairs'. The simple meaning was that India would attain Dominion Status as defined in the Statute of Westminster passed by the British Parliament in 1931.

The steps to be taken for the realization of this 'object' fell into two categories. During the War, and until a new Constitution could be framed in the post-War period, the British Government in London would 'retain control and direction of the defence of India as part of their world war-effort'. But in order to 'organize to the full the military, moral and material resources of India' for victory in the War, 'the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations' was 'desired and invited'. In explaining this part of the Draft Declaration

Cripps said that the intention of the British Government was 'as far as possible, subject to the reservation of defence, to put power into the hands of the Indian leaders'. There would be no constitutional or legal change; the Indian leaders selected for the exercise of power would be appointed Members of the Governor-General's Executive Council and function within the existing legal framework.

The second part of the Draft Declaration stated that 'immediately upon the cessation of hostilities' steps would be taken to 'set up in India an elected body charged with the task of framing a new Constitution for India'. This 'body' would be composed of (1) persons elected by the Legislative Assemblies of the provinces according to the system of proportional representation, and (2) 'representatives' of the Princely States. The Constitution framed by this 'body' would be 'accepted and implemented forthwith' by the British Government subject to two conditions: (1) Any province of British India which was not prepared to accept this Constitution would 'retain its present constitutional position', but provision would be made 'for its subsequent accession if it so desires'. With such 'non-acceding provinces' the British Government might 'agree upon a new Constitution, giving them the same full status as the Indian Union'. (2) A treaty would be signed between the British Government and the Constitution-making 'body', making provision for all matters arising out of the transfer of power as also for protection of racial and religious minorities. The Indian Union would have the power of 'deciding in the future its relation to the other Member States of the British Commonwealth', i.e., it would be free to secede from Britain if it so desired. Every Princely State would be free to 'adhere to the Constitution' or decline to do so. In either case, the treaties of the British Government with the States would have to be revised 'as required in the new situation'.

Rejection by Congress

In a memorandum (6 July 1942) submitted to the War Cabinet by Cripps it was stated that the 'most powerful' of the influences working against a political settlement was Gandhi. The decline in confidence in the prospects of British victory due to the Japanese successes in South-East Asia—specially the British defeats in Malaya and Burma—had also 'a considerable effect'. In March 1942 there was a news-flash that Subhas Chandra Bose had died in an air-crash. Gandhi, deeply moved,

sent a message of condolence to his mother, paying a tribute to his services to India. Cripps complained to Azad about this tribute from a believer in non-violence to a propagandist of the Axis Powers. Although the news of Bose's death turned out to be false, Gandhi's 'admiration' for him was, according to Azad, 'one of the factors which clouded the discussions during the Cripps Mission'. According to Cripps, Gandhi's opposition to any agreement was due to his faith in non-violence as also to his fear that, in case of a settlement, he would be 'superseded in the leadership of Congress by Nehru or some other supporter of violence'.

The official Congress view was that the 'novel' provision relating to the non-accession of provinces to the Union was 'a severe blow to the conception of Indian unity and an apple of discord likely to generate growing trouble in the provinces'. Gandhi described it as 'an invitation to the Muslims to create a Pakistan'.

As regards the Princely States, the Congress found two grave defects in the Draft Declaration. Their representatives in the 'Constitution-making body' would be nominated by the rulers, not elected by the people. This was 'a negation both of democracy and of self-determination'. Secondly, some States might decline to accede to the Union and become 'enclaves' for the preservation of 'foreign (i.e., British) authority' and permit the stationing of 'foreign (i.e., British) armed forces' in their territories. For the defence of the States 'left out of the Union', Cripps said, the British Government would have continuing responsibility. Obviously this 'responsibility' could not be discharged without maintaining British troops in their territory. This would be a threat to free India's security.

The provision relating to the proposed treaty between the British Government and the 'Constitution-making body' created two difficulties. The principle of 'protection of racial and religious minorities' might leave loopholes for British interference. Secondly, as Cripps said, the British Government 'should try and get protection for British commercial interests'.

The immediately operative part of the Draft Declaration was the formation of a Central Government to which power would be transferred, subject to the reservation of defence which would continue to be controlled by the British Government. The first difficulty was the composition of this 'National Government', i.e., 'a Government mainly composed of repre-

representatives of Indians with Viceroy and (British) Commander-in-Chief'. Was it to be fully Indianized? What would be the proportion of Congress and Muslim League representatives? Secondly, the 'National Government' would be—from the legal point of view—the old Executive Council which the Governor-General could overrule. If that system continued, he would retain the ultimate authority and there would be no real transfer of power to its Indian Members. The explanation offered by Cripps was not satisfactory. Thirdly, there was no agreement on the question of control of defence. The list of subjects proposed to be put in charge of the Indian Member for Defence 'would have made his position ridiculous in the eyes of the public', as Nehru said. From the Congress point of view nothing less than 'a Cabinet Government with full power' (i.e., an Executive Council which the Governor-General could not overrule) and effective control over defence could make the popular appeal which was urgently required to secure India's full co-operation in war-efforts. The argument that constitutional changes were not possible during the War was not correct. Churchill had actually proposed a union of France and England on the eve of the fall of France.

The Congress categorically rejected the Cripps Proposals, but stated that it was 'yet prepared to assume responsibility provided a truly National Government is formed'.

Rejection by Muslim League

The Muslim League also rejected the Cripps Proposals. Its principal objection related to the scheme of one Indian Union for two 'principal nations'; the creation of more than one Union (consisting of the non-acceding provinces) was 'relegated only to the realm of remote possibility and is purely illusory'. The system of proportional representation for election of the 'Constitution-making body' was a 'fundamental departure' from the system of Separate Electorates. The 'method and procedure laid down for non-accession by provinces to the Union were 'such as to negative the professed object'. As the Proposals for the future were unacceptable it was useless to discuss the interim arrangement relating to 'National Government' for which no complete picture was available.

Role of Churchill

During his talks with the Congress leaders Cripps changed his attitude under pressure from Prime Minister Churchill. The latter intervened decisively to prevent Cripps from con-

ceding 'National Government' in the form demanded by the Congress, as also from arriving at an agreement on Indian control of defence. He had always been hostile to India's political aspirations. He had described Gandhi as a 'naked *faqir*'. As Prime Minister he declared that he had not become the King's First Minister to 'preside over the liquidation of the British Empire'. Even the crisis of the War failed to make any real change in his old outlook. Behind his veto on the realistic attitude of Cripps lay not only his adherence to the nineteenth-century view of imperialism but also the obstinacy and shortsightedness of Linlithgow and Amery who were unwilling to make substantial concessions to India.

3. WAVELL PLAN (1945)

Political deadlock (1942-45)

Three years of political deadlock followed the failure of the Cripps Mission. Jinnah reiterated his demand (April 1942) for the 'unequivocal recognition' of the Muslims' 'right of self-determination', i.e., the partition of India. Gandhi made contradictory statements. He declared that he 'would love to see a joint fight (by Hindus and Muslims) for independence'; but 'if the Muslims wanted partition, they must have it' (April 1942). A month later he changed his ground and wrote that he 'considered vivisection of India to be a sin' (May 1942).

The 'Quit India' Movement temporality removed the Congress from the field of constitutional politics. The leaders, kept in confinement, lost touch with the workers who were demoralised by the failure of the Movement. This was an important factor in strengthening the Muslim League in Bengal, Sind and Assam. In Bengal and Sind Muslim League Ministries were formed. In Assam a pro-Muslim League Ministry came into office. In the provinces under Governor's rule, the administration was anti-Congress, and pro-Muslim League.

Jinnah gained further ground when Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan died (December 1942) and the Premiership of the Punjab fell upon the 'spineless' Khizr Hyat Khan who, unlike his predecessor, was ready to submit to the control of the Muslim League. In April 1943 a secret official note described Jinnah as 'more aggressive, more challenging and more authoritative than before'. The Communist Party of India, released from the official ban in July 1942, extended its support to Jinnah's plan of partition on the basis of its theory that India was a multinational

country. In May 1944 Khizr Hyat Khan was expelled from the Muslim League; but he remained Prime Minister of the Punjab and pledged his 'whole-hearted support' to the ideal of partition.

Lord Wavell succeeded Lord Linlithgow as Governor-General in October 1943. He had been Commander-in-Chief during the 'Quit India' Movement. He could not forget that the Congress had obstructed his work by sabotage and destruction of communications while the Muslim League had offered its co-operation. But he was not prepared to bless the idea of partition. Linlithgow had stressed publicly the geographical unity of India, adding that a divided India could not make its way in the world (December 1942). Following this precedent, Wavell said: 'You cannot alter geography. From the point of view of defence, of relations with the outside world, of many international and external problems India is a natural unit' (February 1944).

Gandhi-Jinnah talks (1944)

In April 1943 Jinnah had publicly invited Gandhi (who was confined in Poona) to 'write direct' to him provided he was 'really willing to come to a settlement with the Muslim League on the basis of Pakistan'. Gandhi wrote a letter in reply, but it was published after his release in May 1944. The Madras leader, Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, who had been carrying on propaganda in support of Pakistan since his resignation from the Congress in 1942, now took up the role of a go-between and sent to Jinnah a formula prepared by him with Gandhi's approval. Jinnah rejected it outright. Undeterred by this rebuff, Gandhi met Jinnah in September 1944. As many as 14 interviews took place and letters were exchanged, but no agreement emerged.

For the first time Jinnah stated that Pakistan should comprise six provinces—Sind, Baluchistan, North-West Frontier Province, the Punjab, Bengal, Assam—subject to agreed 'territorial adjustments'. The word 'Pakistan' was not mentioned in the Lahore resolution (1940) and its 'original meaning' covered the Punjab, the Afghan province (i.e., North-West Frontier Province), Kashmir, Sind and Baluchistan. Now Kashmir was excluded, and Bengal and Assam were included. These six 'independent' provinces, Jinnah added, would 'form units of Pakistan'. He argued that India 'contained two nations, i.e., Hindus and Muslims', and both should have their 'homelands'

in this sub-continent. Gandhi's repudiation of this theory was unequivocal. He wrote : 'I find no parallel in history for a body of converts and their descendants to be a nation apart from the parent stock. If India was one nation before the advent of Islam, it must remain one in spite of the change of faith of a very large body of her children'. Yet he was prepared to accept the partition of India into two separate States if they bound themselves by a treaty providing for the satisfactory management of matters of common interest such as foreign affairs, defence, communications, customs, commerce, etc. No common Central authority was mentioned ; but in the absence of such an authority, treaty provisions could not be implemented. Jinnah rejected this scheme, for in his opinion there would be no real partition if Pakistan had to share with India control of these vital subjects. Gandhi explained his reaction as follows : 'If partition means utterly independent sovereignty so that there is to be nothing in common between the two, I hold it to be an impossible proposition'.

Wavell's move

Wavell assumed Viceroyalty (October 1943) when the people were in the grip of a grave economic crisis : scarcity of essential commodities, increasing cost of living, and Great Famine in Bengal. Politically the country was much more divided than it was when Linlithgow had taken charge (April 1936). The history of his long Viceroyalty was 'a cumbersome record of frustration and futility'. Linlithgow bequeathed to his successor 'an unenviable legacy'.

Wavell's advantage was an intimate knowledge of the situation which he had acquired as Commander-in-Chief of India. It was a disadvantage too, for it obstructed a fresh and open-minded analysis of the political problem. But he was 'not a clear political thinker nor at home with politics and politicians'. He did not possess the political skill to solve India's extremely complex political problem. 'If Linlithgow's Viceroyalty ended in negation, Wavell's ended in despair'.

In May 1944 Gandhi was released on medical grounds ; but Wavell rejected his request for an interview either with the members of the Congress Working Committee (who were still in gaol) or with the Viceroy. The breakdown of the Gandhi-Jinnah talks (September 1944) stressed the continuity of the communal problem and widened the gulf between the Congress and the Muslim League. In October 1944 Wavell wrote

a letter to Churchill in which he proposed a Plan for 'a provisional political Government' (i.e., a Government of India composed of Indian political leaders). It was provisionally rejected by the British War Cabinet. He went to London (March 1945) and waited there for more than two months for a final decision. The War in Europe ended, and Churchill's War-time Coalition Ministry resigned, in May 1945. But Churchill formed a 'caretaker' Government which approved the Plan, and Wavell announced its details in India in June 1945.

Simla Conference (1945)

Wavell's Plan was important only because it aimed at breaking the deadlock; it offered nothing to India except an opportunity to take part in the Central Government with the Viceroy's veto and the Commander-in-Chief's position intact. A new Executive Council was to be formed; it would be entirely Indian in composition, except for the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief who would retain his position as 'War Member'. All other portfolios—including Home, Finance and External Affairs—would be held by Indian Members. The Governor-General's veto would 'not be exercised unreasonably'. This interim arrangement would 'in no way prejudice the final constitutional settlement'. The proposals affected British India only; the relations with the Princely States would remain unaffected, i.e., the Governor-General would retain his full power. The Plan would be discussed at a Conference to which the leaders of the important political parties would be invited.

The members of the Congress Working Committee were released. The Conference assembled at Simla on 25 June 1945. There were 21 invitees including Abul Kalam Azad (Congress President), Jinnah, leaders of the Sikhs, Europeans and the Scheduled Castes, as also some Premiers or ex-Premiers of provinces. The Hindu Mahasabha was not invited. Gandhi did not attend the Conference, but he remained at Simla during the discussion and was available for consultation by the Congress leaders.

The deliberations of the Conference were held under the presidency of the Viceroy. There was general agreement on three points: (1) prosecution of war against Japan (Germany had already surrendered); (2) interim administration of British India by an Executive Council 'consisting of men of influence and ability recommended by the Conference'; (3) Indianisation of all portfolios in the Executive Council, except the War port-

folio which would be held by the Commander-in-Chief. But differences on two points remained unresolved ; (1) composition of the Executive Council ; (2) the Viceroy's veto which the Congress wanted to be abolished but the Muslim League wanted to be retained. The Congress submitted a list which included two 'Caste Hindus', one Muslim, one Parsi and one Indian Christian. This 'proved, if proof were needed, that the Congress was a truly national organization'. The Premier of the Punjab, Khizr Hyat Khan, claimed a seat for a Punjabi Muslim representing the Unionist Party which was in power in that province. Jinnah did not submit any list, but he objected to the inclusion of any non-League Muslim in the Executive Council. Wavell himself prepared a list which gave the Muslims, who constituted only about 25 per cent of the total population of India, 6 representatives in an Executive Council of 14. This arrangement was rejected by the Congress as also by Jinnah. Moreover, Jinnah demanded, in addition to the retention of the Viceroy's veto, some other safeguards for the Muslim Members of the Executive Council, e.g., a provision requiring a clear two-thirds majority in case of proposals objected to by the Muslim Members all of whom would be his nominees.

Wavell dropped the Plan ; the deadlock continued. The Congress complained that he 'capitulated' to Jinnah, for the Viceroy should have taken a forward step as the Congress had agreed to join the Executive Council even though the Muslim League had decided to keep out. But Wavell hesitated to depend upon an Executive Council which would be fully in the Congress grip, and it was unlikely that Prime Minister Churchill would accept such an arrangement. The importance assigned to the Muslim League was not justified by the political situation in the country, for it was not then in power in any of the Muslim-majority provinces except Bengal. If Wavell had Indianized the Executive Council with the support of all parties, including the Unionist Party of the Punjab, other than the Muslim League, Jinnah's stock would have fallen to such an extent that the idea of partition would have been discredited among the Muslims. But Wavell's decision strengthened Jinnah ; it was a demonstration of his power to make the British Government 'capitulate' to him even when all other parties were ranged against him. The Cripps Plan had failed because it was rejected by the Congress as also by the Muslim League ; the Wavell Plan failed because it was rejected by the Muslim

League alone. Less than a year later Jinnah found himself in a much stronger position, and the partition of India was in sight.

4. CABINET MISSION PLAN (1946)

Genesis

The Labour Party's landslide victory in the first post-War General Election in England led to the installation of a Labour Government with Clement Attlee as Prime Minister, Lord Pethick-Lawrence as Secretary of State for India, and Sir Stafford Cripps as President of the Board of Trade (July-August 1945). A tendency emerged in Congress circles to connect the traditional sympathy of British Labour with India's aspiration for self-government as a spur to quick action'. The Congress felt that the Labour Party, with a massive majority in Parliament, had 'no excuse for any delay in implementation of the pledges indicated by the Socialist movement at large'.

There was a sense of urgency in London as well. Pethick-Lawrence announced (8 August 1945) that the 'goal to be reached' was 'none other than Equal Partnership between Britain and both India and Burma'. This was followed by a policy announcement proposing four measures (19 September 1945): (1) elections in the coming cold weather; (2) setting up of a Constituent Assembly for framing a new Constitution; (3) discussions by the Viceroy with the newly elected members of the Provincial Legislatures on the possibility of a fresh approach to the Cripps Plan; (4) reconstruction of the Viceroy's Executive Council to secure the 'support of the main Indian parties'.

The next step taken by the Labour Government was the decision to send a 'Delegation' or 'Mission' from England to India for the purpose of negotiations with Indian leaders. The Mission would consist of three members of the British Cabinet (Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and A. V. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty), and the Viceroy was to be associated with it in the negotiations. They would 'operate within the broad framework' laid down by the Cabinet.

Attlee explained this decision in an announcement in the House of Commons (19 February 1946). He made a crucial point. The minorities, he said, should be 'able to live free from fear', but 'we cannot allow the minority to place a veto on the advance of the majority'. This statement was generally

taken to imply the new British Government's disapproval of the policy of obstruction hitherto followed by the Muslim League.

Problems before Cabinet Mission

The three Cabinet Ministers arrived in New Delhi on 24 March 1946. Their 'approach towards the problems which they were called upon to solve were not identical'. Pethick-Lawrence had a 'sentimental interest in India', but no realistic appreciation of the difficulties to be faced. Cripps, the ablest and the most well-informed member of the team, had intellectual links with the Congress in spite of the unpleasant memory of 1942. Alexander was not a full supporter of the transfer-of-power idea. Their associate—Wavell—was positively anti-Congress. Gradually a rift developed within the Mission; Cripps insisted on agreement with the Congress, but Wavell and Alexander preferred the Muslim-League.

There was no unity in the Congress High Command; Gandhi, Azad (the Congress President), Patel and Nehru held different views with regard to the objective. Gandhi was opposed to the 'two-nation theory' and the formation of two Constitution-making bodies. Azad thought in terms of a weak Centre, leaving to the provinces all subjects other than foreign affairs, defence and communications. He hoped that a large measure of provincial autonomy would weaken the cry for partition. Patel wanted subjects like currency and finance to be assigned to the Centre; he also believed that trade, industry and commerce could be developed only on an all-India basis. Nehru contemplated a middle-of-the-way solution. He wanted 'a federation of autonomous units'; there were to be two lists of subjects assigned to the Centre—a compulsory list including defence, foreign affairs, communications, currency, etc., and an optional list of subjects which the provinces would be free to reserve for themselves or to delegate to the Centre. But he was prepared to leave any 'definite area' free to keep itself out of the federation if it expressed its will clearly—through a plebiscite of all its adult voters—in favour of separation. This was a conditional recognition of the principle of partition of India.

Jinnah knew his own mind, and his word was law to the other leaders of the Muslim League. He declined to go into details which would be open to criticism; he insisted only upon the partition of India. Casey, the Australian Governor of

Bengal, said in a Conference of Governors that none of the other leaders of the Muslim League 'could explain what Pakistan meant'. The demand for Pakistan had not yet taken firm roots in the Muslim-majority provinces. Wavell wrote that it was 'stronger in the Muslim-minority provinces' than in the Muslim-majority provinces where the Muslims were 'already well on top'.

In any settlement of the constitutional problem, the future of the Princely States was second in importance only to the issue of partition. The British Government was concerned primarily with the future of Paramountcy. Was it to continue to be vested in the Governor-General functioning as the representative of the British Crown? Was it to be transferred to the new Federal Government? There were different views on the legal, constitutional and political aspects of this problem. Again, there might be difficulties about the accession of the States to the Federation. Hyderabad, for instance, liked 'to continue as a unit distinct from the rest of India and in relation with the British Crown'.

Cabinet Mission Proposals: Union of India

So far as the differences between the Congress and the Muslim League were concerned, the Cabinet Mission's interviews and correspondence with their leaders failed to produce any agreement. But the Cabinet Mission did not consider that its responsibilities had ended. A statement containing its observations and proposals was published on 16 May 1946.

The Cabinet Mission noticed 'an almost universal desire, outside the supporters of the Muslim League, for the unity of India' as well as the 'acute anxiety of the Muslims' to escape subjection to 'a perpetual Hindu-majority rule'. But it could not recommend the creation of a separate and fully independent sovereign State of Pakistan as claimed by the Muslim League. In the north-western Muslim-majority provinces the non-Muslim minorities (Hindus and Sikhs) would constitute 37.93 per cent of the population; in the north-eastern area (Bengal and Assam) the percentage of the non-Muslims (Hindus and tribals) would be 48.31. The Muslim minority in the remaining provinces of British India would number about 20 million persons dispersed amongst a total population of 188 million. Thus the creation of Pakistan would not solve the communal minority problem. Moreover, there was no justification for including in Pakistan those districts of the Punjab, Bengal and

Assam in which the population was predominantly non-Muslim. The exclusion of those districts from the Punjab and Bengal would involve a 'radical partition' of these provinces, each of which had its 'own common language and a long history and tradition'. Again, any division of the Punjab would divide the Sikhs.

Apart from the communal aspect of the question, there were 'weighty administrative, economic and military considerations'. Partition would mean disintegration of the transportation as also the postal and telegraph systems. The Indian Army, Navy and Air Force would be divided. 'The two sections of the suggested Pakistan (north-west and north-east) contain the two most vulnerable frontiers of India, and for a successful defence in depth the area of Pakistan would be insufficient'. These two sections, again, would be separated by a distance of about 700 miles and 'the communications between them both in war and peace would be dependent on the good will of Hindustan'. Moreover, the Princely States would face greater difficulty in associating themselves with the two units in divided British India.

After rejecting the demand for partition in any form, the Cabinet Mission recommended the following 'basic form' for a new Constitution:

(1) There should be a Union of India, embracing both British India and the States, dealing with foreign affairs, defence and communications, and having the powers necessary to raise the finances for the above subjects.

(2) The Union should have an Executive and a Legislature constituted from British Indian and Princely States' representatives. Any question raising a major communal issue in the Legislature should require for its decision a majority of the representatives, present and voting, of each of the two major communities (Hindus and Muslims) as well as a majority of all the members present and voting.

(3) All subjects other than the Union subjects and all residuary powers shall vest in the provinces.

(4) The Princely States should retain all subjects and all residuary powers other than those ceded to the Union.

(5) 'Provinces should be free to form "Groups" with Executives and Legislatures, and each Group could determine the provincial subjects to be taken in common'. 'As soon as' the new constitutional arrangements 'came' into operation, it

would be open to any province to elect to come out of any Group in which it had been placed. This decision was to be taken by the new Legislature of the province after the first general election under the new Constitution.

(6) The Constitution of the Union and of the 'Groups' should allow any province, by a majority vote of its Legislative Assembly, to 'call for a reconsideration of the terms of the Constitution after an initial period of ten years and at ten-yearly intervals thereafter'.

Cabinet Mission Proposals: Constituent Assembly

As regards the Constitution-making body or the Constituent Assembly, the Cabinet Mission put forward a complicated formula. (1) Each province should be allotted a total number of seats proportional to its population, roughly in the ratio of one to a million. (2) The number of seats allotted to a province should be divided between the 'main communities' in its population—'General' (all persons other than Muslims and Sikhs), Muslims, Sikhs—in proportion to their numerical strength. (3) The representatives allotted to each 'main community' in a province should be elected by the members of that community in its Legislative Assembly by the method of proportional representation with single transferable vote. The number of representatives of the Princely States, calculated on the basis of population adopted for British India, would not exceed 93; the method of selection would be 'determined by consultation', i.e., the question whether they were to be nominated by the rulers or elected by the people was left open.

The Constitution-making body would consist of 293 members from British India (including one member from Baluchistan) and not more than 93 members from the Princely States. The British Indian members would be divided into three 'Sections':

Section A: Madras, Bombay, United Provinces, Bihar, Central Provinces, Orissa. (Total number of members: 'General', 167; Muslim, 20).

Section B: Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind, Baluchistan. (Total number of members: Muslim 23, 'General' 9, Sikh 4).

Section C: Bengal, Assam. (Total number of members: Muslim 36, 'General', 34).

A treaty would be negotiated between the Constituent Assembly and Britain to provide for 'certain matters arising

out of the transfer of power'. Whether India would remain a member of the British Commonwealth would be a matter for her 'own free choice'.

While Constitution-making proceeded administration should be carried on by a Government 'having popular support'. For this purpose an Interim Government would be formed; all the portfolios, including that of War Member, would be held by 'Indian leaders having the full confidence of the people'.

Congress and Muslim League

The Muslim League adopted a resolution on 6 June 1946 accepting the scheme and committing itself to join the Constituent Assembly. The Congress Working Committee, in its resolution of 25 June 1946, accepted the proposals relating to the Constituent Assembly but rejected the proposal of the formation of an Interim Government.

After the departure of the Cabinet Mission for London (29 June 1946) the elections to the Constituent Assembly were held in July 1946. The Muslim League adopted a resolution on 29 July 1946 withdrawing its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan and calling upon 'the Muslim nation to resort to Direct Action to achieve Pakistan'. Jinnah declared: 'Today we bid good-bye to constitutional methods. Today we have also forged a pistol and are in a position to use it'.

The pistol was used first in Calcutta (August 1946) and then in some Hindu-minority districts in East Bengal (including Noakhali). There were large-scale massacres, arson, looting and crimes against women; the Hindus were the victims. Bengal was then under the rule of a Muslim League Ministry. There was retaliatory violence against the Muslims in Bihar. This ring-dance of violence foreshadowed the terrible happenings in the Punjab and in the North-West Frontier Province in 1947. Jinnah's pistol initiated an era of communal violence without precedent in modern Indian history.

Jinnah's rejection of the Cabinet Mission Plan was due to two reasons. First, the Congress adopted the view that the Constituent Assembly was a 'sovereign body', implying that it was not bound by the restrictions prescribed by the Cabinet Mission. Nehru spoke in terms of 'broadening the Centre', i.e., extending the power of the Central Government to some subjects (e.g., large industries, foreign trade, currency, etc.) beyond those listed in the Cabinet Mission Plan. This was

an entirely wrong view. It alarmed the Muslim League which thought that the Congress would use its overwhelming majority in the Constituent Assembly to create a strong Centre dominated by the Hindus. Secondly, the Congress held that the provision relating to 'Grouping' was optional, i.e., any province in any Section could decline to join a 'Group'. This provision actually affected the interest of a single province: Assam. It was a non-Muslim-majority province; but if compulsorily linked with Bengal, it would be subject to a 'Group' Constitution dominated by the Muslims. The Muslim League held that 'Grouping' was compulsory, for otherwise it would have no hold on Assam. Its interpretation was finally supported by the British Government (6 December 1946).

Interim Government (1946-47)

An Interim Government was formed by Wavell on 2 September 1946. From the strictly legal point of view it was the Governor-General's Executive Council. It was composed of 12 members (including 3 Muslims) nominated by the Congress and Nehru was its Vice-President. The Muslim League was left out because, although it had taken part in the elections to the Constituent Assembly, it declined to join that Assembly. But about two months later (26 October 1946) Wavell admitted 5 nominees (including a Scheduled Caste Hindu from Bengal) of the Muslim League (replacing 3 out of 12 Congress nominees who were already in the Interim Government) into the Interim Government although it did not agree to join the Constituent Assembly. This was a violation of the Cabinet Mission Plan, for the Constituent Assembly and the Interim Government were linked together; but the Congress weakly accepted it.

The Congress soon realized the seriousness of its mistake. The Muslim League members of the Interim Government, led by Liaquat Ali Khan (who was Finance Member) and supported by Wavell, formed a 'King's party' and embarrassed the Congress members in different ways. Dissensions between the two groups of members almost paralysed the administration. The Muslim League had joined the Interim Government not to co-operate with the Congress but to fight against it from a strong position in the citadel of power.

Constituent Assembly

In nominating candidates for election to the Constituent Assembly (July 1946) the Congress did not confine its choice either to Hindus or to *bona fide* Congressmen; it selected

'Caste Hindus', Scheduled Caste Hindus, *Adivasis*, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, Parsis—in fact, persons from all categories which could be grouped under the heading 'General'. It selected some persons who had never served it, and some persons who had actively opposed it in the political sphere.' This was a clear testimony of its earnest desire to function truly as a national organization in the interest of the country as a whole although the terms of the Cabinet Mission Plan did not allow it to elect any Muslim. This liberality of the Congress was recognized by Lord Pethick-Lawrence in a speech in Parliament.

The policy of the Muslim League was in sharp contrast with this confident liberalism of the Congress. No one but a confirmed Leaguer was favoured with nomination for the Constituent Assembly. So the Muslim League stood completely isolated not only from all non-Muslims but also from all Muslims who did not subscribe to the demand for Pakistan.

The representatives of the Princely States did not begin to join the Constituent Assembly till April 1947, but 50 per cent of them were nominees of the rulers and did not really represent the people of the States.

The Constituent Assembly, though elected in July 1946, met for the first time on 9 December 1946. But the Muslim League, adhering to its resolution of 29 July 1946 declaring its rejection of the Cabinet Mission Plan, did not join. In the absence of the Muslim League members and the members from the Princely States (who began to attend from April 1947) the Constituent Assembly, attended by Congress members only, was a truncated body. It could not fulfil the purpose of framing a Constitution acceptable to all parties. The Muslim League did not join even after the British Government's approval (6 December 1946) of its view—initially rejected by the Congress—that the 'Grouping' of provinces was compulsory.

The Constituent Assembly began to function in December 1946. Rajendra Prasad was elected President. Nehru moved the *Objectives Resolution*, proclaiming India as 'an independent sovereign Republic' in which 'all power and authority . . . are derived from the people'. The 'units' of the Republic would be 'autonomous', exercising 'all powers and functions of government and administration, save and except such powers and functions as are vested

in or assigned to the Union or as are inherent or implied in the Union or resulting therefrom'. The Resolution was kept in suspension for several weeks in the hope that the Muslim League would join and participate in the discussion. It was passed unanimously on 22 January 1947 when it was clear that the Muslim League would not join.

During the early months of 1947 the Constituent Assembly worked through different committees on rules of procedure, rights of minorities, administration of tribal areas, etc. Some members representing the Princely States joined in April 1947. In July 1947—after the acceptance of the Mountbatten Plan by the Congress and the Muslim League—the Muslim League members from the Hindu-majority provinces, as also members from the Princely States, came in. The representatives of the territories assigned to Pakistan formed a separate Constituent Assembly.

The real work of the Constituent Assembly began after partition. The new Constitution was finalised on 26 November 1949. It came into effect on 26 January 1950.

5. MOUNTBATTEN PLAN (1947)

Attlee's policy (1947)

In December 1946—when the Muslim League's determination to boycott the Constituent Assembly and bickerings in the Interim Government due to differences between Congress and League members created a political deadlock—Prime Minister Attlee realised that the Indian situation demanded a new policy and a new Viceroy to implement it. The result was his decision—announced on 20 February 1947—to send Lord Louis Mountbatten to replace Lord Wavell who had brought the Muslim League into the Interim Government without securing its participation in the Constituent Assembly.

There was really no prospect of peaceful implementation of the Cabinet Mission Plan. Attlee thought that, instead of waiting indefinitely for a Congress-League settlement, a date-line for the transfer of power should be fixed and the responsibility for a settlement imposed directly on the two parties. He was afraid that any postponement of the transfer of power would affect India's faith in Britain and embitter future relations between the two countries. A more practical argument was Britain's inability—in view of her depleted administra-

tive and military resources—to control the situation that was developing in India. The recruitment to the Indian Civil Service had been suspended during the War; as a result the 'steel-frame' of the British administrative structure in India had been weakened. The number of British troops in India was rapidly reduced from the wartime level. The example of the Indian National Army, organized and led by Subhas Chandra Bose, might weaken the loyalty of the Indian section of the British Indian Army. It was, therefore, necessary to 'specify some terminal date' beyond which the British should not be willing to continue their responsibility for the government of India.

This was the background of Attlee's statement of 20 February 1947. Its central point was the decision to 'transfer power to responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948'. It indicated the possibility of transfer of power 'to some form of Central Government for British India, or in some areas to the existing Provincial Governments'. This clearly foreshadowed the partition of the country, for 'the existing Provincial Governments' obviously meant the Governments in the Muslim-majority provinces. Again, Paramountcy was not to be transferred to 'any Government in British India'. The British Government would negotiate an agreement with regard to matters arising out of the transfer of power with the representatives of those to whom power would be transferred. The new Viceroy, Lord Louis Mountbatten, would be 'entrusted with the task of transferring to Indian hands responsibility for the government of British India'.

Mountbatten

Mountbatten, the thirty-fourth and last of the British Governors-General and the last of the Viceroys, arrived in New Delhi on 22 March 1947. He said that his was not a normal Viceroyalty: his task was to make constitutional arrangements for the transfer of power by June 1948. For the speedy accomplishment of his mission he was invested with extraordinary powers. He was to carry out his assignment without constant reference to London and without constant interference from London. No such freedom had been allowed to Cripps in 1942, to Wavell in 1945, or to the Cabinet Mission in 1946.

Mountbatten Plan (3 June 1947)

Mountbatten spent two months in negotiations and then prepared a Plan which was accepted by the leaders of the Con-

gress and Jinnah on 2 June 1947. It was announced by Attlee in the House of Commons on the next day; therefore, it came to be known as 'the June 3rd Plan'.

The essence of the Plan was the partition of India. The purpose of the British Government, it was stated, was neither 'to frame any ultimate Constitution for India', nor to 'interrupt the work of the existing Constituent Assembly'. But no Constitution framed by that Assembly could apply to those parts of the country which were unwilling to accept it. It was, therefore, necessary to ascertain the wishes of the people of such areas on the issue whether the Constitution was to be framed in the existing Constituent Assembly, or in a 'new and separate Constituent Assembly'. For this purpose the following procedure would be adopted.

Each of the Provincial Legislative Assemblies of Bengal and the Punjab (excluding the European members) would meet in two parts, one representing the Muslim-majority districts (16 in Bengal and 17 in the Punjab), and the other representing the remaining districts. Members of the two parts of each Assembly, sitting separately, would decide by vote whether or not the province should be partitioned. In the event of partition being decided upon, each part of the Assembly would, on behalf of the areas it represented, decide whether it would join the existing Constituent Assembly or a 'new and separate Constituent Assembly'. Boundary questions arising out of partition would be decided by a Boundary Commission appointed by the Governor-General.

In the case of Sind, the Legislative Assembly would choose which of the two Constituent Assemblies it would join. In the case of the North-West Frontier Province, the choice would be made, not by the Legislative Assembly, but by the people directly through a referendum held under the aegis of the Governor-General. The Governor-General would decide the manner in which Baluchistan would make its choice between the two Constituent Assemblies. Should Bengal be partitioned, a referendum would be held, under the aegis of the Governor-General, in Sylhet, a Muslim-majority Bengali-speaking district in the non-Muslim-majority province of Assam which was contiguous to the Muslim-majority part of Bengal. The purpose of this referendum would be to ascertain whether Sylhet would continue to form part of Assam or be amalgamated with the new province composed of the Muslim-maj-

ority districts of Bengal. Fresh elections would be held in the two Bengals, in the two Punjabs and in Sylhet for the choice of representatives in the respective Constituent Assemblies on the basis of the principle laid down in the Cabinet Mission Plan.

Agreement with the tribes of the north-west frontier would have to be negotiated by the 'appropriate successor authority'.

As regards the Princely States, there would be no transfer of Paramountcy from the British Crown to any 'successor authority'.

Legislation would be introduced in Parliament to establish 'one or more successor authorities' on a Dominion Status basis within the current year. It would be open to each Constituent Assembly to decide whether or not the part of India which it represented would remain within the British Commonwealth.

Implementation of Mountbatten Plan

The Plan was implemented with unprecedented speed. The Bengal and Punjab Legislative Assemblies decided in favour of partitioning the provinces. The Sind Legislative Assembly decided to join a 'new and separate Constituent Assembly'. In Baluchistan a decision to join a 'new and separate Constituent Assembly' was made by a meeting of the *Shahi Jirga* and the non-official members of the Quetta Municipality. In the North-West Frontier Province the followers of Abdul Gaffar Khan boycotted the referendum; as a result only 50.49 per cent of the voters took part in it, and the decision was in favour of joining a 'new and separate Constituent Assembly'. In the referendum in Sylhet a majority voted for joining the new province composed of the Muslim-majority districts in Bengal. The voting process in all these cases was completed by the middle of July 1947. Two Boundary Commissions with a common Chairman, Sir Cyril Radcliffe, demarcated the boundaries between the two Punjabs and the two Bengals. Their award was handed over to the leaders of the Congress and the Muslim League on 17 August 1947.

The Armed Forces were divided between India and Pakistan. Most of the European members of the Secretary of State's Services (including the Indian Civil Service) retired on payment of compensation. Of the Indian officers and clerks of all ranks, practically all non-Muslims opted for service in India and practically all Muslims for service in Pakistan.

Congress and partition

By the time Mountbatten arrived, the Congress leaders had given up their half-hearted plea for the preservation of India's unity and he had little difficulty in making them swallow the pill of complete partition. The Working Committee resolution of 8 March 1947 made no comment on Attlee's announcement (20 February 1947) that power might be transferred 'in some areas to the existing Provincial Governments'. On the other hand, it was stated that the Constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly 'would apply only to those areas which accept it'. This clearly meant acceptance of the principle of partition.

The Congress had ceased to be a revolutionary organization after the failure of the 'Quit India' Movement. On release from prison in 1945 the Congress leaders became anxious for immediate transfer of power in a peaceful manner through a policy of non-resistance. After the failure of the Wavell Plan (1945) all ideas of resort to direct action were given up. The abandonment of the tradition of struggle was described by the Congress President, Abul Kalam Azad, as pursuit of a 'steady course'.

Gandhi's secretary and biographer, Pyarelal, offers an explanation of the Congress leaders' acceptance of partition. They were 'past the prime of their lives', they had 'come within sight of the promised land', and it seemed that 'freedom might slip through their fingers when it seemed almost within their grasp'. They might have rejected partition 'if the hour of decision had come earlier when they were young'.

Another point stressed by Pyarelal is that the Congress leaders' 'experience in the Interim Government and the exercise of power had coloured their thinking and outlook'. As members of the Interim Government they—particularly Vallabhbhai Patel who was Home Minister—were irritated by the continuous obstruction of their Muslim League colleagues. They realized that no co-operation with the Muslim League was possible. On the other hand, after the separation of the Muslim-majority areas India might have a strong Central Government capable of consolidating and developing the rest of the country. Thinking on these lines, Patel consented to the creation of Pakistan. Nehru's conversion followed. Whatever reluctance he had was 'worn down' step by step by Mountbatten's persistent persuasion.

Gandhi declared: 'If the Congress wishes to accept partition, it will be over my dead body. So long as I am alive I will never agree to the partition of India'. But he changed his mind after talks with Mountbatten; probably Patel also influenced him. He came to regard partition as inevitable. Every one yielded readily; none thought of a last-ditch stand. Only Azad preferred to wait for two or three years in the hope that by that time the Muslim League would be forced to come to terms; but he was isolated. The policy of non-resistance had become the unwritten creed of the Congress. It was 'revolution by consent' that the Congress leaders aimed at.

The leaders' decision was formally ratified by the All-India Congress Committee on 15 June 1947 by 157 votes against 29; as many as 32 remained neutral. Gandhi's personal intervention was needed to weaken criticism. While recommending the acceptance of partition he said: 'Out of mistakes, sometimes good emerged. Lord Rāmachandra was exiled because of his father's mistake, but ultimately his exile resulted in the defeat of Ravana, the evil'. Pakistan's invasion of Kashmir, the terrible holocaust in the Punjab, the large-scale exodus of the Hindus from East Pakistan, the Indo-Pak Wars of 1965 and 1971, the continuing tension in the sub-continent: these clearly indicate that the Mahatma's hope was merely a pious wish.

The only consolation for the Congress was that Jinnah, instead of getting the Pakistan of his dream, got a 'moth-eaten Pakistan'. The non Muslim-majority areas in the Punjab and in Bengal, as also the entire province of Assam (except a part of Sylhet), remained within the boundaries of the new India. In a sense this was a blessing for Pakistan, for undivided Bengal and undivided Punjab, with very large non-Muslim minorities, would have created grave internal tensions.

Indian Independence Act (1947)

Legal provision for the transfer of power was made by the Indian Independence Act, passed by the British Parliament in July 1947.

The Act provided for the setting up of 'two independent Dominions . . . to be known respectively as India and Pakistan', on 15 August 1947. The territories of the Dominion of India would include the whole of British India exclusive of the territories constituting Pakistan, i.e., West Punjab, Baluchistan, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and East Ben-

gal. There would be no prohibition of accession of the Princely States to either of the new Dominions.

Each of the new Dominions would have a Governor-General appointed by the King. The Legislature of each Dominion would have 'full power to make Laws for that Dominion including laws having extra-territorial operation'. No Act passed by the British Parliament would extend to either of the Dominions. The Dominion Legislatures were given full legislative sovereignty and the British Parliament's legislative control over the affairs of the Dominions was abolished. The British Government would no longer have any responsibility for the government of territories which were formerly included in British India.

As regards the Princely States the suzerainty of the British Crown lapsed. All treaties and agreements relating to them—as also to the tribal areas—lapsed. The British Crown would no longer exercise any function in regard to any of these territories.

There would be a change in the royal title : the imperial title would be dropped, i.e., the King-Emperor would now be called King.

Appointment by the Secretary of State to the Indian Civil Service and other Services would be discontinued.

Some temporary provisions were made as to the government of the new Dominions. The Constituent Assembly of India would exercise the powers of the Legislature in the Dominion of India. A new Constituent Assembly was to be formed in Pakistan, and it would exercise the powers of the Legislature in that Dominion. The two Dominions, as also the provinces, would be governed 'as nearly as may be' in accordance with the Act of 1935 unless and until the Constituent Assembly concerned made other provisions.

Epilogue

The Indian Independence Act did not stand in the way of India's complete separation from the British Commonwealth. India remained a Dominion till 25 January 1950, and the King of England remained the King of India from 15 August 1947 to 25 January 1950. Mountbatten ceased to be Viceroy, but remained Governor-General from 15 August 1947 to 21 June 1948. His successor, Rajagopalachari, held the office of Governor-General till 25 January 1950; he was the first—and last—Indian holder of this exalted office. India

became a Republic on 26 January 1950. On that date the Constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly (which had been finalized on 26 November 1949) came into force, India ceased to have any constitutional link with the British Crown, the office of Governor-General lapsed, and the Head of the Republic was designated President. Rajendra Prasad, the President of the Constituent Assembly, became the first President of India.

India remained a member of the Commonwealth and recognized the British King as Head of the Commonwealth; but he had no constitutional or political function in respect of India (1949).

India had become an Original Member of the United Nations in October 1945.

Under the Indian Independence Act the Princely States were theoretically free to join either India or Pakistan, or to 'enter into particular political arrangements' with either of them. The Congress, however, did not recognize 'the right of any State in India to declare its independence and to live in isolation from the rest of India'. It invited the ruling princes to make their States 'democratic units in the Indian Union, thereby serving the cause of their own people as well as of India as a whole'. To this appeal they responded promptly, and by 15 August 1947 all States within the geographical limits of the Dominion of India—except two Hindu-majority States under Muslim rulers, Junagadh and Hyderabad—acceded to India.

The Nawab of Junagadh wanted to accede to Pakistan, but a popular rising resulted in its merger in India. The Nizam of Hyderabad was at first unable to decide whether to declare independence or to join India or Pakistan. He made a Standstill Agreement with India in November 1947. Internal anarchy in the State made it necessary for the Government of India to take military occupation of it in November 1948. The Nizam formally acceded to India in November 1949.

Kashmir, a State with an overwhelming majority of Muslim population under the rule of a Hindu prince, was geographically contiguous to both India and Pakistan. The Maharaja at first made a Standstill Agreement with Pakistan; but he acceded to India in October 1947 when he found himself unable to defend the State against a Pakistani invasion. This step made Kashmir an integral part of India from the legal

and political points of view. The dispute arising out of Pakistan's invasion of Kashmir and military occupation of a part of the State towards the close of 1947 was referred by India to the Security Council of the United Nations. That international body failed to solve the problem. Kashmir remains a State within the Indian Union, enjoying a special status under the Constitution, although Pakistan is still in *de facto* control over the area which its troops occupied in 1947.

On 30 January 1948 Gandhi, whom the people adore as the 'Father of the Nation', fell a victim to a communal fanatic's bullet. The noblest soul of the present century perished in the flames of hatred and violence which had resulted a few months earlier in the partition of the country. The people of India were deprived of his personal guidance, but the ideals which he has left are imperishable.

ECONOMY (1914-47)**1. INDUSTRY***Unorganized industries*

During the first half of the present century the traditional handicrafts located in both rural and urban areas did not register any decline; in fact they actually showed an increase in output, and continued to provide the bulk of the employment in the industrial sector. For instance, the handloom industry gained at the cost of imported cotton goods, and in 1941-42 handloom products accounted for 35 per cent of the total consumption of cotton piece-goods in the country.

There was also a significant change in the structure of the traditional handicrafts. These were originally organized—like agriculture—on the family basis. Gradually they became dependent on the supply of capital from external sources and adopted the workshop type of organization. In the case of weaving, for instance, the capitalists provided the raw material and purchased the finished products. They sometimes employed the weavers on a wage basis. At the same time partial advantage was taken of the modern industrial technique, e.g., use of machines and central reeling, winding or sizing.

Major industries : Cotton Mills

Of the industries in the organized sector the cotton-mill industry was the biggest, and it was financed mainly by Indian capital. By 1913-14 there were 264 mills employing over 266,000 people. India ranked as the fourth greatest cotton-manufacturing country in the world. During the First Great War the industry lost some important export markets and was crippled to some extent by the impossibility of importing machinery from England. Yet production increased because imports of piecegoods declined and consequently the domestic market improved. Moreover, the Indian mills received large Government orders at prices yielding a fixed percentage of profits.

After the War the Government's tariff policy offered the industry an effective protection of 7.5 per cent. Yet the industry entered a prolonged period of depression after 1923-

Among the reasons were the emergence of Japanese competition, the loss of the China market in yarn, the rise in the prices of cotton as also of imported mill stores, and the fall of the purchasing power of the peasantry. The Bombay mills suffered more in comparison with the mills in other centres. Some protective measures were taken by the Government of India.

The Great Depression of the thirties hit the cotton industry. In 1933-34 agreements were concluded with Japan as also with the Lancashire cotton industry to remove some of the difficulties of the Indian cotton interests. In 1939 an Indo-British Trade Agreement fixed a minimum quota for British imports into India and guaranteed minimum sales of raw cotton in the British market.

The Second Great War created conditions favourable for the expansion of the cotton-mill industry. By 1941 the Japanese competition was eliminated. There was an enormous expansion in the export market. Large war orders stimulated production.

Major industries : Jute Mills

Initially the Indian jute industry faced the competition of the older jute industry of Dundee. But it had certain advantages, such as cheaper raw material and labour as also a lower level of taxes. There was competition from Germany and the United States, and the demand for jute goods fluctuated from year to year as a result of changes in the volume of world trade. The Indian Jute Mills Association met these difficulties by controlling inter-mill rivalries and regulating output. On the whole it was able to keep the rate of profits at a high level. It returned two representatives to the Bengal Legislative Council.

The First Great War gave an impetus to the industry; there was an enormous increase in the demand for jute goods. Production increased, profits rose to enormous heights, but there was very little expansion in the size of the industry. As the export of raw jute was controlled in the interest of the mill-owners, they reduced its price. The result was that the jute-growers got no share of the high profits earned by the mills. The war boom continued for two or three years after the end of the War, for jute bags were in heavy demand for the movement of foodgrains to the war-devastated countries of Europe.

The Great Depression of the thirties led to a sharp decline

in the demand for raw jute and jute goods. The number of mills declined. During the difficult years the acreage under jute was restricted, the working hours in the mills were reduced, and a percentage of the looms were sealed. The position changed for the better after the Second Great War broke out. During the War years the demand for jute goods revived, but the loss of European markets and lack of shipping space created difficulties. Yet the rate of the profits of the jute industry exceeded that in other Indian industries. The Partition (1947) caused a serious dislocation: the bulk of the jute growing area went to (East) Pakistan, but the jute mills remained in India.

Major industries: iron and steel

Modern industrialization is based on the iron and steel industry. The Bengal Iron and Steel Company, incorporated in England in 1889, was unsuccessful in the production of steel because of competition from cheap European steel, but its production of pig iron was satisfactory. In 1919 a new company, called the Bengal Iron Company, took over the assets of the Bengal Iron and Steel Company. Meanwhile the Tata Iron and Steel Company was registered in 1907. At first it produced pig iron only, but steel production began on a regular basis by 1913. After the First Great War, two other iron works were founded: Indian Iron and Steel Company (1918) and Mysore State Iron Works (1923).

During the War years the cessation of steel imports directly promoted the development of indigenous manufactures. Taking advantage of the enormous demand for ammunitions, the Tatas manufactured large quantities of steel shells. They also received large orders from the Railway Board for supply of steel rails. They exported considerable quantities of pig iron to Japan.

Difficulties began after the termination of the War. Imported steel flooded the Indian market; but the Tatas continued expansion, tried to build a market for steel within the country, and explored the possibility of securing foreign markets. They received State assistance (in the form of higher import duties as well as bounties on certain categories of manufactures, such as steel rails and railway wagons) under the policy of discriminating protection adopted by the Government of India in 1923.

In 1927 the Government of India provided for preferential treatment of steel imported from British on the ground that steel imported from Continental European countries was 'sub-standard'. Public opinion was opposed to Imperial Preference

in this or in any other form. In later years some of the import duties on protected items of steel were revised. Despite these difficulties the Tatas continued their progress. In 1939 they produced three-fourths of the steel consumed in India.

During the Second Great War there was a considerable increase in the demand for iron and steel. Production was increased by straining the capacity of the existing machinery, for new machineries could not be imported and installed. Thus arose problems of rehabilitation of plant and machinery in the post-War years. But the closing years of British rule in India found the Indian iron and steel industry in a buoyant mood: the substantial increase in its productive capacity over a period of some four decades had laid one of the most important foundations for the economic development of the country.

Major industries : Sugar

In the second half of the nineteenth century India became an importer of sugar. The main source of supply was Mauritius where British planters had built up a cane sugar industry with the help of Indian indentured labourers. When their interest was adversely affected by the import of European beet sugar, the Government of India deviated from its free trade policy and imposed a duty on beet sugar. Just before the First Great War there was a large increase in imports of sugar from Java which had lost the American market to Cuba. During the War there was a world-wide scarcity of sugar as the production of beet sugar in Europe was hampered by military operations. In India the price of sugar rose to unprecedented heights. Normalcy returned in the mid-twenties when low-priced imports started pouring into India.

Meanwhile, the *Swadeshi* Movement had promoted the investment of Indian capital in the sugar industry. With the progress of the industry sugar-cane became a commercial crop. During the post-War years the acreage under sugar-cane increased considerably in the United Provinces, Madras, and Bihar and Orissa. As a result the interests of the sugar-cane producers became linked with the growth of the industry. Protection of the industry and remunerative prices for sugar-cane growers became important as economic issues.

The Tariff Board constituted in 1931 recommended a protective tariff for the sugar industry, improvement of the quality of sugar-cane, and measures for safeguarding the interests of the cane-growers. Accordingly, duties were imposed on sugar

imports: naturally the indigenous industry prospered. The acreage under sugar-cane rapidly increased; the number of sugar-mills increased from 29 in 1930-31 to 140 in 1936-37. Indian capital investment as also production increased. By 1939 India ceased to require imported sugar.

During the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the Second Great War sugar prices fell to uneconomic levels. During the War years there was a sharp rise in prices. Statutory control was imposed in 1942. Taking advantage of decontrol in 1947-49 the mill-owners artificially raised sugar prices and exploited the consumers.

Other industries

The paper industry was mostly dominated by British capital; it was sustained by Government support in the form of large orders. The First Great War gave an impetus to the industry. It was given protection during the years 1925-47. On the eve of Independence India had 16 paper mills; but in spite of considerable increase in production it was necessary to import certain kinds of high-quality paper.

The leather industry received an impetus during the First Great War; Army boots and other kinds of leather goods were purchased by the Government in large quantities. Production of boots and shoes increased almost twenty times. The industry further expanded during the Second Great War, but scarcity in the supply of raw hide hampered production.

The indigenous glass industry was stimulated by the *Swadeshi* Movement, but it could not hold the market against superior wares imported from Europe. There was a temporary boom during the First Great War; imports were cut off, and diversification of production and improvement of the quality of the products were facilitated by large Government orders. After the War glass imports increased, but the Government declined to impose protective duties. Before the Second Great War imports began to decline, and during the War the industry found further opportunities of development.

Some cement factories were established during the early years of the present century, but their productive capacity was very small. Bulk purchases by the Government during the First Great War stimulated the growth of the industry. There was continuous increase of production despite competition among the producing Companies and the Government's refusal to offer protection. The domestic demand declined during the Second

Great War : but exports were arranged and production was maintained at a high level.

The pioneers in the coal-mining industry were Europeans, but Indian entrepreneurs began to enter the field towards the close of the nineteenth century. In the early years of the present century the Indian coal producers had to face two serious difficulties : high cost of raising coal and competition of imported South African coal. The First Great War gave an impetus to the industry ; there was a rise in production as also in prices. In 1926 the Government rejected the industry's application for protection. There was a boom in coal exports from India during the Second Great War.

Among other mining industries manganese, petroleum and mica deserve mention. India was one of the major producers of manganese and a large exporter. The same remark applies to mica. The production of petroleum was concentrated in Burma. After the separation of Burma from India (1937) the Indian production of petroleum accounted for only 1 per cent of the world production.

In the case of the engineering industry private European enterprise laid the foundations in the second half of the nineteenth century. The industry came into existence in connection with the construction of roads, bridges and Railways. The Railway repairing shops were the earliest units of modern engineering industry in India. The industry could not prosper because the Government imported the bulk of engineering stores from England. It did not prosper during the First Great War even though there was a decline in engineering imports because the Government drastically reduced capital expenditure on Railways. Moreover, the industry found it extremely difficult to import raw material from England. The weakness of the engineering industry continued during the post-War years. Its claim for protection was not recognized, but the liberalization of the Stores Purchase Rules in 1928 helped it to some extent to face foreign competition. The Second Great War provided opportunities of diversification of production ; capital goods like machine tools and consumer goods like bicycles began to be produced on a comparatively large scale.

Lop-sided industrial development

As a result of lop-sided industrial development which had begun in the second half of the nineteenth century there

emerged a distinct division between industrially developed and industrially backward regions. This division was partly mitigated by the slight quickening of industrial development in the thirties. The Great Depression altered the character of trade relations between India and England. India moved closer to a relation of bilateral balance with England. While British exports to India declined drastically, Britain's share in exports from India increased. A change in the political climate and the introduction of Provincial Autonomy increased Indian entrepreneurs' opportunity of influencing the economic policies of the Government as also the relation between the European businessmen and the Indian businessmen. The results of such changes were not confined entirely to the industrially developed regions.

'Stunted industrialization'

Before the outbreak of the Second Great War Indian industry had reached a stage in which the country could be self-sufficient in the production of consumption goods, such as cloth, sugar and matches. But the development of capital goods industries was extremely meagre, and the share of modern industry in the total National Income was very low. The employment created in the modern industrial sector was very limited.

The base provided by private entrepreneurship was not strong enough to serve the requirements of an industrial revolution. From the early years of the present century small businessmen had been setting up cotton gins and presses, jute presses, rice and oil mills, small power-loom or hand-loom factories, small-scale sugar manufacture machines, etc. But they did not introduce any new methods of production or start any industries. They were handicapped by lack of technical skill and scarcity of capital. The industries which grew up under tariff protection were generally controlled by big capitalists, but they were dependent entirely on Western imported machineries and techniques of production.

Moreover, the social structure did not fulfil the requirements of capitalistic growth. The land-revenue systems did not provide scope for capitalistic farming. The administrative system was geared primarily to the maintenance of law and order. Naturally Indian economy remained poor and basically agricultural.

Industrial Organization

By tradition Indian trading and industrial units were in most cases family-based partnerships. The partnership system prevailed also among the European merchants working in India during the first half of the nineteenth century. After the introduction of the limited liability principle in England in 1856, the formation of joint-stock companies with limited liability for share-holders became possible in India. During the sixties quite a large number of such companies came into existence. By the end of the nineteenth century the joint-stock company had become firmly established.

The Managing Agency system originated as an adjunct of the company-type of business organization. The system facilitated a division of functions between the owners of a business concern, i.e., the share-holders of a company, and its managers. 'The Managing Agency firm offered its services for the management of concerns owned by others in consideration of a remuneration'. The Managing Agents supplied not only managerial personnel but also capital. Gradually a company's standing and credit came to depend largely on the business capacity and financial resources of its Managing Agents.

The Indian industrialists adopted the Managing Agency system; it developed and spread in Bombay and Ahmedabad. As the Government imposed no statutory control over the activities of the Managing Agents, they became very powerful between 1880 and 1913. They established full control over the companies managed by them. They secured from them very large sums of money as remuneration and agency commission, commission on sales etc. Their abuses were checked to some extent by the Indian Companies Act of 1936; but their opportunities of defrauding the companies, i.e., the share-holders, were not seriously crippled. 'During the Second Great War rising profits in many industries enabled a number of Managing Agents to dispose of their Managing Agency rights at fabulous prices without any concern for the interests of the share-holders.

Capital

One of the usual explanations for the industrial backwardness of India is the shortage of capital. So far as indigenous capital is concerned, it became scarce in the second half of the nineteenth century when 'capital-using, mechanized methods of production' were introduced by European companies. By the

beginning of the present century the amount of Indian capital in registered joint-stock companies amounted to about Rs. 37 *crores*. As a result of the boom created by the First Great War the paid-up capital of joint-stock companies stood at Rs. 123 *crores*. In 1929-30 the total indigenous capital invested in industries, bank deposits and different kinds of securities was estimated at Rs. 700 *crores*. In 1950 the Planning Commission estimated the value of productive capital in the private sector at Rs. 1,472 *crores*: of this amount the foreign share was less than 20 per cent.

Indigenous capital was drawn from different sources. The major portion of the capital for the cotton industry, which was financed mostly by Indian capital, came from merchants who had already established themselves through trade, banking, money-lending, etc. The Parsis started as brokers and merchants. The Gujaratis were bankers, jewellers, shroffs, and commission agents. The Bengali merchants traded mainly in jute, rice and seeds.

The amount of foreign capital invested in India has been variously estimated. An estimate for 1896 is £294 million. An estimate for 1909-10 is over £365 million. An estimate for 1939 is £829.8 million. During the Second Great War India repatriated a considerable portion of the foreign capital earlier invested in this country. In 1948 the Reserve Bank of India found that India's gross foreign liability amounted to less than £400 million.

The bulk of the foreign capital was invested earlier in Government bonds or in the shares and bonds of the Railway Companies. Tea, coffee and rubber plantations attracted some amount of foreign capital: so did such public utilities as generation of electricity, tramways and waterworks. Foreign banks operating in India used foreign capital for making investments in this country. In 1948 only 50 per cent of India's gross foreign liability could be regarded as 'productive' investment.

The Indian capitalists, as a class, developed independently from the middle of the nineteenth century, and especially after 1914. 'In the main Indian capitalism did not develop an organic link with British capitalism: it was not integrated with foreign capital in India'. Even in early days Indian capitalists 'traded on their own account, under their own financial system, often in competition with British trading firms, and seldom as their compradors'. Their existence did not depend on foreign

capital, 'nor did the overwhelming majority of the Indian industrialists develop as junior partners of British entrepreneurs in India'. But the economy in which Indian capitalism operated was 'integrated with and subordinated to world capitalism'. This was the necessary result of British rule in India.

British Government's economic policy

India occupied a special position in the world wide empire of Britain. Apart from its political importance, India formed—till 1914—the biggest single foreign market for traditional British imports, e.g., cotton textiles, and, to a lesser extent, for engineering goods. Moreover, India's exports to hard-currency areas provided the crucial balancing item in the British Empire's balance of payments. The mechanism of the transfer of India's wealth to Britain was provided by the 'Home Charges', the profits of capital accumulated in India by British nationals, and the payments for the financing and transport of Indian exports and imports.

Naturally exports to India by manufacturing countries other than Britain were discouraged by the British Government, and Government patronage was extended almost exclusively to British manufactures. India—alone among the bigger countries under the British flag—was prevented from adopting the policy of State patronage for industry (including tariff protection against imported goods) which helped to industrialize Canada, Australia and South Africa. The growth of entrepreneurship in most parts of India was systematically discouraged by the political, administrative and financial systems maintained by the Government of India. This was one of the main reasons of India's industrial backwardness.

Far-reaching changes took place after the First Great War. The United States emerged as the leader of world capitalism; Britain's position was weakened. Japan emerged as Britain's major competitor in India's cotton piecegoods market. At the same time the Indian cotton mills began to supply a much larger fraction of the home market. Along with global and local economic changes, a demand for fundamental political changes gathered momentum under the leadership of Gandhi.

In the changed situation the British Government found it necessary to grant some economic concessions to Indian businessmen and industrialists. But the demand for greater State patronage for industries and for promotion of industrialization under the banner of private enterprise was not seriously press-

ed by the nationalist leaders whose attention was directed primarily to political issues. The spokesmen of the Indian capitalists were critical of the slow and halting progress of tariff protection in the twenties. They were critical also of the monetary deflation which was enforced to keep the external value of the rupee at 1s. 6d. But they were prepared to have industrial development limited almost entirely by what would be permitted in a framework of tariff protection. There were demands from representatives of industrial labour that tariff protection should be coupled with measures to improve the workers' standard of living. The landlords, as also the spokesmen of the predominantly agricultural provinces, opposed tariff protection because it favoured only the industrialists and the industrially advanced regions.

Tariff policy

The British Government's opposition to protection of Indian industry was a natural response to its interest in the prosperity of industry in Britain. The Empire, as Joseph Chamberlain said in 1896, 'is Commerce', and England 'would never lose the hold we now have over our great Indian dependency—by far the greatest and most valuable of all the customers we have'. Lord Curzon said in 1903: 'If Indian industries are in need of, or should now desire a measure of protection, protective measures would naturally seriously affect imports from the United Kingdom . . . The merchants of Lancashire or Dundee, to mention two interests alone, would not acquiesce in such a course'.

The reduction of import duty on Lancashire cotton manufactures in 1896, and the imposition of excise duty on cloth produced in Indian mills, provoked nationalist challenge. The *Swadeshi* Movement sponsored the boycott of British goods. But it was the First Great War which initiated a shift in British policy. The general import duty was raised in 1916 and again in 1921; adjustment of duties favoured Indian cotton manufactures. In pursuance of the recommendations of the Indian Fiscal Commission (1921-22) the Legislative Assembly passed a resolution (1923) stating that the fiscal policy should be directed towards promoting Indian industries. A Tariff Board was set up. It scrutinized the claims of certain industries for protection, and protective duties were adopted in respect of the steel, engineering and paper industries. Protection and bounty to the iron and steel industry 'represented the high-

water mark of Government assistance to industrial development' after the First Great War. The cotton-mill industry was benefited by the repeal of excise in 1926.

The adoption of the policy of 'Discriminating Protection' in 1923 was followed by the introduction of 'Imperial Preference' in 1927. The background is provided by the diminishing industrial importance of Britain, and the remarkable recovery of industrial production in European countries like France and Germany, in the late twenties. 'Imperial Preference' meant preferential treatment for goods coming from or going to Britain, the British Dominions, and other British territories. This was opposed by Indian public opinion which was in favour of levying uniform import and export duties on all goods irrespective of their origin or destination. 'Imperial Preference' would reduce the value of protection and help the British producer at the cost of the Indian consumer. However, the Ottawa Imperial Conference of 1932 formalized schemes of 'Imperial Preference'. This system did not prove satisfactory for India. British exports to India increased substantially, but Indian exports to Britain showed only a marginal increase. An Indo-British Agreement signed in 1939 considerably narrowed down the range of preferences for British imports.

The policy of 'Discriminating Protection' was modified in 1940 by a significant liberalization of fiscal policy. The new industries were assured that they would be protected against foreign competition provided they organized themselves on sound lines. In 1945 a special Tariff Board was set up to investigate into the claims of protection of those industries which had come into existence during the Second World War.

2. FOREIGN TRADE

The early years of the present century saw an unusual expansion of India's foreign trade; the value of exports was doubled. Large agricultural surpluses were available from the Punjab and Sind as a result of completion of huge irrigation projects. New industrialized countries like Germany and Japan added to the international demand for Indian raw materials. However, the increase of imports exceeded the increase of exports. Britain's virtual monopoly of sale of manufactured goods in the Indian market was seriously threatened by the competition of her industrial rivals like Germany and Japan.

During the early years of the First Great War the exports declined. Britain changed her production pattern to meet the military requirements. Trade with other European countries, particularly Germany, was cut off. Shipping became comparatively scarce and there was a rise in freights and insurance costs. Towards the close of the War period the situation became more favourable, largely because there was increased demand for jute bags and raw hides for manufacture of soldiers' boots. During the War years imports fell even more rapidly than exports. Britain's share of the imports was affected by the War and supplies from Germany were cut off; but Japan filled in the gaps to some extent.

After the War the normal conditions in respect of Britain and the Continental European countries were restored. A new factor was the development of direct trade relations with India by the United States. There were fluctuations in exports as also in imports. The Great Depression in the prices of agricultural products after 1929 hit Indian export producers—mainly agriculturists—very hard; recovery was delayed till 1936-37. But there was a sudden set-back as a result of the trade 'recession' in the United States in 1937. The prices of raw materials fell again, and there was a sharp decline in the value of Indian exports during the period 1937-39. The uncertainty in international relations, particularly Japan's involvement in war with China, adversely affected India's exports and imports.

After the outbreak of the Second Great War India lost trade with Germany and the countries occupied by the Nazis, but there was expansion of trade with Britain and her Allies. Imports were affected by the preoccupation of Britain and other manufacturing countries with war production. The exigencies of the War necessitated new systems of Export Control and Import Control. In order to secure alternative markets for Indian exports and alternative sources of supply of essential manufactured goods, attempts were made to explore possibilities of Indo-American trade.

Since the third decade of the nineteenth century India's exports consisted primarily of food grains and raw materials. As industrial development made progress in India, manufactured articles, specially jute goods, began to be exported. Before the First Great War the proportion of manufactured articles in total exports was increasing. During the War the percentage

showed a high increase. The composition of external trade changed after the adoption of 'Discriminating Protection' in 1924. During the years 1920-25 the manufactured articles formed 24.8 per cent of the exports; during the period 1935-40 the percentage went up to 30. Towards the close of the Second Great War it was 48.

Between 1869-70 and 1929-30 India passed through a commercial revolution. There was a seven-fold increase in her foreign trade. But the balance of trade showed a net deficit throughout this period. 'This deficit may be treated as equal to the foreign capital investment in the country.'

3. LABOUR LEGISLATION

Growth of labour force

The scarcity of agricultural land, the growth of population, the poverty of the small peasants, the decay of the handicrafts and the distress of the rural artisans—these were among the factors which drove the rural people for employment to the growing commercial and industrial centres. The Railways, the cotton mills and other industries absorbed an increasing number of workers. A steady increase in recruitment of labourers was secured with very little increase in real wages. In 1921 about 2.6 million were employed in organized establishments. The Census of 1931 noted that the number of workers employed in organized industries was 'extraordinarily low for a population the size of India's'. The villager's preference for the rural way of life and for agriculture as the familiar occupation, as also the influences of the caste system and the joint family system, worked against the growth of a large industrial working force. The number of industrial workers increased from 1935 onwards.

Labour legislation

The first official attempt to introduce legislation in the interest of industrial workers was due to the pressure of the Manchester cotton manufacturers on the Secretary of State. Their purpose was to weaken the cotton manufacturers of Bombay who enjoyed 'unfair' advantages through large-scale employment of child labour and long hours of work. A Factory Commission, appointed by the Bombay Government in 1875, recommended certain measures for the regulation of conditions of work in the cotton factories; but the Government of India took no action, primarily because the Indian mill-owners.

opposed 'vexatious and useless restrictions' in matters relating to labour.

Some regulation of labour conditions was introduced a few years later by the Factories Act of 1881. After investigation into the working of this Act, and in conformity with the resolutions passed by the International Labour Conference in Berlin in 1890, the Factories Act of 1891 was passed. It imposed restrictions on the hours of work for women and children. Another Factories Act, passed in 1911, extended the restrictions to seasonal factories working for less than four months a year. Meanwhile working conditions in the mining industry had been regulated by the Indian Mines Act of 1901, and the Government of India had appointed a Chief Inspector of Mines to supervise the working of the Act. However, laws 'could be easily evaded as there was no adequate machinery for enforcing them, and the working conditions in many Indian industries at the beginning of the present century recalled the early phases of the Industrial Revolution in England'.

During the First Great War two important changes occurred. The International Labour Organization started working; its conventions and recommendations carried weight with the Government of India. The Trade Union movement in the country was gathering momentum. After the War a comprehensive review of the existing factory law became necessary. The Factories Act of 1922 was comprehensive in scope in respect of better conditions of work. The Workmen's Compensation Act of 1923 recognized the principles of employers' liability for all injuries sustained by workmen in the course of their work. The Indian Mines Act was amended in 1923 and better facilities were provided for miners.

In the closing years of the twenties labour unrest spread all over India. The growing influence of the Communists, who derived inspiration from Soviet Russia, on the working class alarmed the Government of India. The result was the appointment (by the Secretary of State) of a Royal Commission on labour in India under the chairmanship of J. H. Whitley. The Factories Act of 1934 was passed to give effect to the recommendations of this Commission in respect of industrial workers. Several other Acts also arose out of the recommendations of this Commission. The purpose of the Tea District Emigrant Labour Act of 1932 was to improve the condition of the plantation workers in the Assam tea gardens. The

Indian Mines Act of 1935, thrice amended during the years 1936-40, sought to improve the condition of the miners. The Indian Railways Act of 1930 and the Indian Dock Labourers Act of 1934 benefited workers in the Railways and in the Docks respectively. The Payment of Wages Act of 1936 provided for timely disbursement of wages to labourers. The Employment of Children Act of 1938, amended in 1939, imposed further restrictions on employment of children.

The Trade Disputes Act of 1929 marked the beginning of legislation for peaceful settlement of disputes between employers and employees. It provided for the appointment of Courts of Inquiry and Boards of Conciliation, but it curbed the workers' right to strike to some extent. After the introduction of Provincial Autonomy in 1937 the new Provincial Governments made use of this Act, and some of them appointed committees to make exhaustive enquiries into the conditions of industrial workers. During the Second Great War several measures were adopted to improve the efficiency and morale of the workers with a view to stimulating war production. Mention may be made of the Maternity Benefit Act of 1941, the Weekly Holidays Act of 1942, the Factories Act of 1945, the Mica Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act of 1946, etc. Other measures—such as the Industrial Disputes Act and the Minimum Wages Act of 1948—followed Independence. 'Generally speaking, India had, by 1950, built up one of the most comprehensive labour codes to be found in any country at India's level of development'.

Workers' wages

The workers' efficiency depends largely upon two factors: conditions of work, and standard of living which is determined by wages. Till the end of the First Great War there was hardly any upward trend in wages although the price level rose sharply during the War. There was a rise in wages during the post-War years till the slump began about 1925. During the Great Depression of 1929-33 the wage cuts assumed serious proportions. During the Second Great War money wages showed an upward trend, but inflation and sharp rise in prices kept the workers' real income at a low level.

4. CURRENCY AND BANKING

Currency

The First Great War created a new situation in which the main recommendations of the Royal Commission on Currency

and Finance (the Chamberlain Commission) could not be implemented. There was a short-term run on Indian currency offices for the encashment of notes. Long-term difficulties arose out of the sudden increase of foreign demand for Indian currency and the rise in the price of silver. There was large excess of exports over imports. Moreover, remittances had to be made to India from England to meet expenses of the War in the eastern theatre. As a result of the imposition of restrictions in England on export of gold, the British liability to India could not be discharged through remittance of bullion. Due to the excessive purchase of silver for coinage the price of this metal increased. As a result the face value of the silver rupee fell below the value of its silver content. The exchange value of the rupee rose from 1s. 5d. in 1917 to 2s. 4d. in 1919.

In 1919 the Babington Smith Committee was appointed to suggest measures for the stabilization of the rupee. On the basis of its recommendations the rupee was statutorily declared to be equivalent to 2s. gold and sovereigns were declared legal tender at 23s. 10d. each. Thus the rupee was linked to gold and not to sterling. But the Government failed to maintain the 2s. gold rate because in the immediate post-War years the balance of trade began to move against India. In 1921 the rupee fell below 1s. gold. There were great fluctuations in the exchanges, resulting in widespread disturbance of trade and heavy loss to the Government. The Government resorted to contraction of currency and reduction of public expenditure. Gradually the exchange rate rose, reaching 1s. 10d. in 1925.

The Hilton Young Commission was set up in 1925 to make a comprehensive review of the currency situation. It recommended the introduction of a Gold Bullion Standard, i.e., a gold standard without a gold currency. The silver rupee and the currency note would continue to be the ordinary medium of circulation, but they would be directly convertible into gold. This open link between the normal currency and gold would secure public confidence. The rupee-sterling ratio (Re. 1 to be equivalent to 1s. 6d.) recommended by the Commission was opposed by the Indian business interests which demanded reversion to the pre-War ratio (Re. 1 to be equivalent to 1s. 4d.).

When Britain left the Gold Standard in 1931 the Government of India adopted a purely Sterling Exchange Standard, i.e., the gold links of the rupee were abandoned, but the rupee-sterling rate fixed by the Hilton Young Commission was main-

tained. Official measures left the Indian price of gold at a lower level than its British price. As a result large quantities of gold were exported from India to Britain during the years 1931-37.

During the Second Great War the 'Home' Government paid for its rupee expenses by handing over sterling securities to the Government of India's account at the Bank of England. The accumulated sterling balances remained blocked during the War; when the War ended these were released in instalments so as not to upset Britain's balance of payments.

Banking

The Indian joint-stock banks founded under the impetus of the *Swadeshi* Movement financed trade and industry in big towns and large commercial centres. They played no part in foreign exchange business which was controlled by the Exchange Banks managed by foreigners. The financing of agriculture was left to the indigenous bankers and money-lenders.

The Indian joint-stock banks were generally weak in capital and management; some of them were guilty of corrupt practices. Between 1913 and 1917 as many as 87 banks failed. There was a revival of Indian banking in the post-War period. But banks with a paid-up capital of Rs. 5 lakhs and over numbered only 27 in 1921.

The Exchange Banks, with headquarters outside India, formed during the years 1848-66, controlled the financing of export and import trade. They opposed the Presidency Banks when the latter wanted to raise funds in London and participate in foreign exchange operations. The Secretary of State supported them even though the Government of India supported the Presidency Banks. 'The controlling power of British finance-capital' hindered India's economic development.

In 1921 the three Presidency Banks (Bengal, Madras, Bombay) were amalgamated into the Imperial Bank of India. It functioned as banker to the Government until the establishment of the Reserve Bank of India in 1935. But it was not the country's Central Bank, for it was not in charge of the note-issue, and the management of the foreign exchange reserves was not entrusted to it.

The proposal for the establishment of a Central Bank in India was discussed as early as 1836. The Hilton Young Commission (1925) recommended the establishment of a full-fledg-

ed Central Bank for the purpose of sound monetary management. The Central Banking Enquiry Committee (1931) endorsed this recommendation.

The Reserve Bank of India came into existence in 1935 as a private share-holders' bank; but the Government of India had large control over its management and formulation of policies. It was to function as a bankers' bank and regulate the banking system of the country. It initially followed a policy of consolidation rather than of systematic expansion of banking; but its very existence exercised a healthy influence on the banking system as a whole by generating confidence among the bankers and the depositors.

During the Second Great War the Reserve Bank had to provide funds for the Government of India against sterling securities in the Bank of England. It became 'for all practical purposes, a subordinate branch of the Bank of England'. It 'failed to develop as a national institution with a concern for domestic stability and an interest in domestic expansion'. Consequently it was nationalized (1949) after Independence.

The Central Banking Enquiry Committee (1931) made certain recommendations for the improvement of the working of the commercial banks. These were implemented through certain provisions in the Indian Companies Act of 1938. But these proved inadequate for safeguarding the interests of the depositors and for developing the banking system as a whole. No change, however, could be made during the Second Great War. A comprehensive Banking Companies Act (1949) was passed after Independence.

5. AGRARIAN PROBLEMS

Tenancy legislation

The forms of land tenure in different parts of India were represented by the Zamindari, Ryotwari and Mahalwari systems introduced in the closing years of the eighteenth and the early decades of the nineteenth century. These were modified later by new tenancy legislation as also by the pressure of new socio-economic factors, but these was no basic change.

In Bengal, the classic land of the Zamindari system, the Tenancy Act of 1885 was twice amended in the present century. By an Act of 1928 'occupancy rights' of the ryots were made transferable by sale, subject to certain special privileges reserv-

ed for the landlords. This arrangement did not benefit those actual tillers of the soil who were tenants-at-will or share-croppers (*bargadars*). After the introduction of Provincial Autonomy another Act was passed in 1938, abolishing those special privileges of the landlords and preventing enhancement of rent on any ground. Certain rights were conferred on under-tenants, but nothing was done to improve the condition of the share-croppers. A Land Revenue Commission appointed by the Provincial Government recommended the abolition of the Permanent Settlement (1940). The Second Great War intervened. After Independence the zamindari estates were acquired by the State Government through an Act passed in 1953.

After the introduction of Provincial Autonomy legislation in favour of tenants was passed in several provinces including Bombay, the Central Provinces, the United Provinces, and Bihar. Certain special privileges were conferred on a section of the peasantry, generally known as 'occupancy' or 'protected' ryots; but the bulk of the peasantry remained unprotected. They remained subject to rack-renting and eviction.

The real character of the agrarian structure cannot be ascertained from the provisions of the Tenancy Acts alone. The poverty of the peasants, and the acute competition for cultivable land, made them a prey to different kinds of exploiters: landlords, *jotedars* or big cultivators, money-landers. Lands passed into the hands of land-jobbers, lawyers, traders, money-lenders and capitalists. The concentration of land in the hands of non-agriculturists and the development of a class of *kulaks* changed the complexion of the agrarian system. Apart from the erosion of old rights through tenancy legislation, the Zamindari system disintegrated for several reasons, such as the partition of estates, the sale of estates for non-payment of revenue, and the purchase of estates by rich lawyers, traders and money-lenders who constituted a new and heterogeneous class of landholders.

Agricultural indebtedness

Agricultural indebtedness took two forms: cash loan and crop loan. Cash loans were often secured by mortgages which in many cases led ultimately to transfer of land to the *mahajan*. The total volume of debts in India was estimated by the Central Banking Enquiry Committee (1931) at Rs. 900 *crores*. There was a 'steep increase' during and after the Great Depression. The Usurious Loans Acts of 1918 and 1926, Debt Conciliation

Boards established in different provinces in the thirties, creation of agricultural banks, the Reserve Bank's special interest in agricultural credit, etc., made no substantial contribution to the reduction of the burden of debt on the agriculturists. The co-operative movement, sponsored by the Co-operative Societies Acts of 1904 and 1914, did not yield the expected results. There were 81,305 Co-operative Societies in 1929, but the money-lenders dominated the rural credit system.

Agricultural policy

Apart from measures to improve the rural credit system the Government's agricultural policy had two other aspects: promotion of irrigation and provision of facilities for agricultural marketing.

Following the recommendations of the Irrigation Commission (1901) the public investment in irrigation showed a tendency to rise from 1903 onwards. The capital outlay on irrigation rose from Rs. 72.35 lakhs in 1920-21 to Rs. 153.89 lakhs in 1939-40. But irrigation was mainly confined to the Punjab, Sind, the United Provinces and Madras; it was hardly extended in other parts of the country. Irrigation was an important contributory factor to the growth of acreage and yield per acre.

The Royal Commission on Agriculture (1928) noted the absence of an agricultural marketing organization at the Governmental level. In 1934 the Government of India appointed a Principal Marketing Adviser to the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research. In 1937 the Central Legislature passed the Agricultural Produce (Grading and Marketing) Act which made provision for inspection and grading of products. In the thirties the provincial Agricultural Departments were strengthened on the marketing side.

Famine policy

The recommendations of the Famine Commission of 1901 provided the guidelines for the Government's famine policy in the present century. Although there were serious famines in 1918 and 1920-21, famines were less frequent and the mortality rate was lower than it had been in nineteenth-century famines. This is explained by improvements in the system of transport as also in the measures for famine relief.

The Great Famine of 1943 in Bengal, which took a very heavy toll of life, was due to War conditions and weak and cor-

rupt administration. In this case R. C. Dutt's view that 'dreadful and desolating famines' were primarily due to the high incidence of rent provides no explanation. The incidence of rent in the Zamindari estates in Bengal was lower than that in the provinces where the Ryotwari system prevailed. The Bengal Tenancy (Amendment) Act of 1938 prohibited the enhancement of rent on any ground. Agricultural prices rose after the commencement of the Second Great War. Yet Bengal could not escape a repetition of the horror through which she had passed in 1770.

Agricultural production

The rate of growth in agricultural production registered a decline after 1914, but in one sector—commercial crops—the output showed a substantial increase. The area under cultivation increased from 199.71 million acres in 1901-2 to 209.96 million acres in 1939-40. This was due partly to irrigation; the main reasons were increase in population and absence of alternative employment opportunities which drove the rural people to bring marginal lands under cultivation.

The relative stagnation in agricultural output was due to many factors, such as rack renting, rural indebtedness, alienation of land to non-agricultural classes, subdivision and fragmentation of land holdings, deforestation which caused drought, construction of railway embankments which caused floods, etc. Production of food grains was affected by the cultivators' preference for commercial crops which brought higher prices due to the growth of export and domestic markets. The comparative rise in the prices of food-grains during the Second Great War benefited the profiteering grain-dealer rather than the actual producer who was often compelled by poverty to sell his produce at low prices.

The positive efforts of the Government to promote agricultural production—such as reform of tenancy laws, restraints on money-lenders, extension of the co-operative credit system, irrigation projects, etc.—made no substantial impact on the cultivators' problems. The failure of official policy was reflected in peasant and tribal movements.

TRIBAL AND PEASANT MOVEMENTS

In the context of the increasing attention paid to the tribes and the peasantry since Independence it is necessary to look back upon their efforts to improve their lot during the preceding period. The political leaders took some interest in the peasantry, but the tribes were practically left in isolation. The latter's protest often took a violent form; but the British Government was too strong to be made to yield to their primitive type of resistance.

1. TRIBAL MOVEMENTS

Tension in tribal areas was due to several factors. The laws introduced by the British rulers were too sophisticated to suit the tribal customs relating to property—those relating to joint ownership of land by a tribal community, for instance. Greedy money-lenders, traders and land-grabbers penetrated into tribal areas and exploited the simple, illiterate people whom law and administration did not protect. Increasing official control of forest zones for revenue purposes seriously disturbed tribal economy. They lost opportunities of shifting cultivation. They lost customary rights of using forest land for grazing and using forest timber as fuel. They found themselves exposed to exploitation by forest contractors. When railways were pushed through their areas they were harassed by railway employees and contractors. Crafty agents and distant plantations—the tea gardens of Assam, for instance—recruited them as coolies by alluring them through false assurances. Their traditional religious life was disintegrated by the spread of Christianity by European missionaries. The new religion also affected their social customs and habits of life. This happened particularly in Bihar and the Assam hills.

Apart from numerous tribal risings in the Assam hills, the two most important tribal rebellions in the eastern region took place among the Santals and Mundas living in the Bengal-Bihar border region. The Santal rebellion of 1855 compelled the Government to introduce some ameliorative measures, but the problem of the tribes was not solved. A serious Munda rising, known locally as the *Ulgulan*, was led by Birsa Munda in the region south of Ranchi in 1899-1900. It was mainly a protest against agrarian oppression, but at the final stage it became a movement against the British Government. Birsa,

initially educated by missionaries, came under Vaishnava influence, and then claimed to be a prophet with miraculous powers. Starting the movement as a peasant leader, he developed into a religious-cum-political leader. He sponsored violence and urged the 'Killing of Thikadars and Jagirdars and Rajas and Hakims and Christians'. The resistance failed. He was captured; he died in jail. Many of his followers suffered punishment. A few years later some relief was provided for agrarian distress through settlement operations and modification of the tenancy law.

In the Orissa-Central Provinces region (Bastar, Kalahandi, Mayurbhanj) there were Khond risings in 1910 and 1914. The Oraons of Chota Nagpur—neighbours of the Mundas—were involved in a more or less pacific movement (the 'Tana Bhagat' movement) in 1914.

In Rajasthan (Banswara and Dungarpur States, adjoining Mewar) there was a serious rising of the Bhils in 1913. It 'developed into a bid to set up a Bhil raj'.

In South India the main theatre of tribal upsurge was the east coast. There was a formidable rising in the 'Rampa' country in the Vizagapatam Agency in 1879-80. It was directed against the local *mansabdar*, but it had to be suppressed by the Madras Infantry. A guerilla war was led in the 'Rampa' region in 1922-24 by Alluri Sitarama Raju. He was an admirer of Gandhi, but not of non-violence.

The tribal movements were isolated outbursts against local (though more or less similar) grievances which were primarily economic in nature. The primary targets were local vested interests; British official agencies were drawn into conflict, generally because grave questions of law and order were involved. So the tribal movements cannot be looked upon as an aspect of the anti-imperialist struggle even though they occasionally had a political overtone. They are important for students of history because they throw light upon the sufferings of a section of the people who were not politically vocal and whom the politicians engaged in the struggle for freedom did not try to mobilize against foreign rule.

2. PEASANT MOVEMENTS

Peasant movements were more frequent and more widely distributed than tribal movements. They reflected the prevailing agricultural distress which was due largely to the inequalities in the land system. The character of the peasant move-

ments differed from region to region and from time to time. They sometimes assumed semi-political or communal complexion under the stress of developing political situations.

Bengal

In Bengal the rigours of the Permanent Settlement were softened gradually by legislation in 1859, 1885, 1928 and 1938 ; and grounds for the abolition of private landlordism were prepared after the introduction of Provincial Autonomy (1937). But legislation could not prevent growing unrest among the peasantry, for it offered concessions without solving the basic problems of the growing population dependent upon land.

Despite the mild pro-tenant provisions of the Rent Act of 1859, the zamindars enhanced rent through the imposition of cesses (*abwabs*) and used crafty methods for depriving the ryots of the benefit of the right of 'occupancy'. A fairly widespread peasant movement took place in some districts of East Bengal (now in Bangladesh) in the seventies and early eighties of the last century. The storm-centre was Pabna, a comparatively prosperous jute-growing district. An agrarian league was formed in 1873. The movement centred round the question of rent and was directed against the zamindars and not against the British Government. It was generally peaceful. It had two features which demand special notice. First, it provided a model for peasant combinations at a time when there was no Kisan Sabha or political party to organize the peasantry. Secondly, it was non-communal even though all zamindars were Hindus and the Muslims formed a large majority of the tenantry. The Hindu peasants fought side by side with the Muslim peasants against the Hindu zamindars. The Government of Bengal recognised the peasants' right to combine in defence of their interests although it condemned violence. The middle-class Hindu intelligentsia took a sympathetic attitude towards the peasants. The Indian Association (formed in 1876) organized a campaign in defence of tenant rights.

The Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885, which followed the Pabna 'disturbances', improved the position of the 'occupancy' ryots ; but there was little improvement in the position of the large section of the peasantry which was not included in this privileged category. There was resistance to the Hindu zamindars by the Muslim peasantry in some East Bengal districts in the post-Partition years ; but it was a political-cum-communal

outburst, not a primarily agrarian movement. The Muslim cultivators, encouraged by pro-Partition Muslim zamindars like the Nawab of Dacca and provoked by *mullahs*, attacked anti-Partition Hindu zamindars and money-lenders.

A *praja* movement began modestly in 1914. It was strengthened in subsequent years by the formation of peasant organizations. Their demands were satisfied to a considerable extent by the Bengal Tenancy (Amendment) Acts of 1928 and 1938. The no-rent campaign in Midnapore in the early thirties was an aspect of the Civil Disobedience Movement; it did not reflect agrarian grievances.

The *Tebhaga* Movement (1946-47) was a politically organized agrarian struggle for improvement of the position of the share-croppers (*bargadars*) who formed a substantial section of the cultivators in Bengal. It was sponsored by the Bengal Provincial Kisan Sabha, an organization controlled by the Communist Party. The main demand was that the share-croppers should have two-thirds of the crop, instead of half or less, and the owner of the land (who took no part in actual cultivation) should have one-third only. The main centre of the movement was North Bengal. Strong repressive measures were taken by the Muslim League Ministry. It also prepared a *Bargadar* Bill as a conciliatory measure which, however, did not become law before 1950.

North India

In Bihar, where the Permanent Settlement and the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 were in force, the peasant movement connected with Gandhi's Champaran *Satyagraha* was directed against European indigo-planters who exercised some zamindari rights. There was a widespread peasant movement in some of the northern districts in 1919-20. It was directed against the biggest zamindar in the province, the Maharaja of Darbhanga. Some concessions were made to the better-class tenants. Official hostility and lack of sympathy on the part of the Congress crushed a movement which the North Bihar zamindars 'regarded as a most dangerous attack on zamindars as a class'.

In later years the cause of the Bihar peasantry was pushed by the Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha founded by Swami Sahajanda Saraswati in 1929. The Sabha launched a movement against zamindars in the Monghyr district in 1936.

In the United Provinces a Kisan Sabha was founded in 1918. In 1920-21 there was a formidable peasant movement in some districts in the Oudh region. In the twenties the Congress secured virtual control of the peasant movement in Uttar Pradesh. Its role was limited to half-hearted arbitration between zamindars and tenants. However, in the late thirties the U.P. Congress began to advocate abolition of the Zamindari system.

In the Punjab the problem of tenant rights was complicated by two factors: the conflict between urban and rural interests, and the policies of the Sikh ruling princes in their States. The ruling Unionist Party tried generally to protect the peasantry—particularly its relatively prosperous section—against the urban money-lending class. In 1930 there were local outbursts of peasants in a few districts. There were Akali-sponsored peasant-based movements for civil and political rights as also agrarian reforms in East Punjab States like Patiala.

In Rajasthan Mewar was officially described in 1921 as 'a hotbed of lawlessness'. Peasant movements occurred in 1905, 1913, 1916 and 1922.

Western India

In Gujarat Gandhi initiated the people of the Kheda district in the technique of resistance in 1918. A peasant rising took place at Bardoli in 1921 in connection with the Non-co-operation Movement. The *satyagraha* at Borsad in 1923-24, led by Vallabhbhai Patel, was a highly successful demonstration of the Gandhian ideology. He led a 'no-revenue' campaign at Bardoli in 1927-29 and compelled the Bombay Government to postpone revenue revision. On the whole, the peasants of Gujarat made some concrete gains by following the Gandhian programme, thanks to Patel's bold and resourceful leadership.

In some of the Marathi-speaking Deccan districts of the Bombay Presidency riots against unscrupulous money-lenders broke out in 1875. They were mostly immigrants from Rajasthan. They exploited the distress of the Maratha peasantry badly affected by the fall in cotton prices and the sharp rise in land-revenue in the late sixties. The Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act of 1879 protected to some extent the interests of the peasants.

From 1945 the Communists organized movements in the Thana district near Bombay city against forest-contractors, money-lenders and landlords.

In 1946-47 the Communists organized a serious political rising in Telengana in the Hyderabad State.

In the Telugu-speaking region of the Madras Presidency forest *satyagraha* in 1921, organized by the Congress, was followed by peasant movements in 1931 and 1934. There were 'no-revenue' campaigns and riots against money-lenders.

In the Travancore State (later merged in Kerala) the Communists organized factory workers, fishermen, agricultural labourers (employed by landlords) and toddy-tapers. They launched a campaign in 1946-47 against the State Government's plan for constitutional changes. There was a violent rising, ending in a massacre. It was not, really speaking, a peasant movement for redress of agrarian grievances. The object of the Communist leaders—as in the case of the Telengana movement—was political. Advantage was taken—in both cases—of the political uncertainties which convulsed the country in the forties.

In Talcher, a Princely State in Orissa, there was a campaign against forced labour, oppressive forest laws and autocratic system of government.

Conclusion

In view of the complex character of the peasant movements it would not be correct to take them in a lump and treat them as an aspect of the national struggle for freedom. The peasants fought mainly against agencies responsible for their economic suffering—not against the foreign rulers who sustained those agencies. The fight came to be mixed up with political issues during the Non-co-operation and Civil Disobedience Movements. In the middle forties the Communists gave it a predominantly political complexion.

From the mid-nineteenth century to the Transfer of Power the British Government was often embarrassed by the peasant movements, but these never developed into a real threat to their authority. They used such force as they considered necessary and sometimes made concessions. The Congress never tried to organize the peasantry as a fighting force against British rule.

GOVERNORS-GENERAL AND VICEROYS (1858-1947)¹

Lord Canning (November 1858-March 1862).²

Lord Elgin I (March 1862-November 1863).

Sir Robert Napier.

Sir William Denison.

Sir John Lawrence (January 1864—January 1869).

Lord Mayo (January 1869—January 1872).

Sir John Strachey.

Lord Napier.

Lord Northbrook (May 1872—April 1876).

Lord Lytton (April 1876—June 1880).

Lord Ripon (June 1880—December 1884).

Lord Dufferin (December 1884—December 1888).

Lord Lansdowne (December 1888—January 1894).

Lord Elgin II (January 1894—January 1899).

Lord Curzon (January 1899—November 1905).

Lord Ampthill (April—December 1904).³

Lord Minto II (November 1905—November 1910).

Lord Hardinge II (November 1910—April 1916).

Lord Chelmsford (April 1916—April 1921).

Lord Reading (April 1921—April 1926).

Lord Irwin (April 1926—April 1931).

*Lord Lytton II.*⁴

*Lord Goschen.*⁵

Lord Willingdon (April 1931—April 1936).

*Sir George Stanley.*⁶

Lord Linlithgow (April 1936—October 1943).

Lord Wavell (October 1943—March 1947).

Lord Louis Mountbatten (March—14 August 1947).⁷

*Sir John Colville.*⁸

¹ The names of those who held the post temporarily are printed in italics.

² He came to India as Governor-General under the Company in February 1856. He remained Governor-General and became the first Viceroy on the transfer of India to the Crown in November 1858.

³ Governor of Madras ; officiated as Governor-General and Viceroy during Lord Curzon's absence on leave.

⁴ Governor of Bengal ; officiated as Governor-General and Viceroy during Lord Reading's absence on leave in 1925.

⁵ Officiated during Lord Irwin's absence on leave in 1929.

- ° Oriciated during Lord Willingdon's absence on leave in 1934.
- 7 Ceased to be Viceroy on 15 August 1947 in accordance with the Indian Independence Act, 1947, and held the office of Governor-General of the Dominion of India from 15 August 1947 to 21 June 1948.

His successor, C. Rajagopalachari, the first and last Indian Governor-General, held office till 25 January 1950.

On 26 January 1950 India ceased to be a Dominion and became a Republic under the Constitution of 1949. The office of Governor-General was abolished ; the Head of the Republic was designated President, and Rajendra Prasad, the first President, assumed this office on 26 January 1950.

- " Officiated in December 1946 and in May 1947 when Lord Wavell and Lord Louis Mountbatten respectively went to London for consultation with the 'Home' Government.

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In this volume, covering the period 1707-1947, a distinguished historian offers a critical survey of modern Indian history which is primarily intended for the benefit of advanced students in the Universities and candidates for the I.A.S. and other competitive examinations, but which will also provide interesting reading material for the general reader. Adequate attention has been paid to political history including frontier policy. Constitutional and administrative developments, economic changes, nationalism and the struggle for freedom, religious and social reforms, and cultural progress have been explained in detail. On the whole, the book is a complete and attractive study of India's emergence as a self-confident nation after the fall of the old indigenous powers and a long period of colonial rule.

Dr. Anil Chandra Banerjee (b. 1910) was the Centenary Professor of International Relations in Calcutta University and he was Guru Nanak Professor of Indian History in Jadavpur University. He presided over the Indian History Congress (Modern India) in 1953, the Punjab History Conference in 1971 and the Rajasthan History Congress in 1973. His research works published so far include : *Guru Nanak and His Times* ; *Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh* ; *Aspects of Rajput State and Society* ; *The Rajput States and British Paramountcy* ; *Peshwa Madhav Rao I : The Eastern Frontier of British India* ; *The State and Society in Northern India* ; *The Agrarian System of Bengal* ; *The Constitutional History of India* ; *The Sikh Gurus and the Sikh Religion*, etc. He has edited *Indian Constitutional Documents*, *The Comprehensive History of India*, Vol IX and *Fort William India House Correspondence*, Vol. XX.

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